



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

The Hermit of  
Carmel  
and other Poems.



George Santayana.



# A Hermit of Carmel

**This One**



**LXLC-CB3-Q7G2**



# A Hermit of Carmel

## And Other Poems

By

George Santayana

New York

Charles Scribner's Sons

1901

*Copyright, 1901*  
**BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS**

---

*Published October, 1901*

---

UNIVERSITY PRESS • JOHN WILSON  
AND SON • CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
A HERMIT OF CARMEL . . . . .	3
THE KNIGHT'S RETURN. A Sequel to A Hermit of Carmel . . . . .	45
ELEGIAC AND LYRIC POEMS . . . . .	83
Premonition . . . . .	85
Solipsism . . . . .	87
Sybaris . . . . .	89
Avila . . . . .	94
King's College Chapel . . . . .	99
On an Unfinished Statue . . . . .	107
Midnight . . . . .	112
In Grantchester Meadows . . . . .	114
Futility . . . . .	116
Before a Statue of Achilles . . . . .	117
Odi et Amo . . . . .	120
Cathedrals by the Sea . . . . .	122
Mont Brévent . . . . .	123
The Rustic at the Play . . . . .	124
Resurrection . . . . .	125



	PAGE
TRANSLATIONS . . . . .	139
From Michael Angelo . . . . .	141
From Alfred de Musset: <i>Souvenir</i> . . . . .	144
From Théophile Gautier: <i>L'Art</i> . . . . .	156
CONVIVIAL AND OCCASIONAL VERSES . . . . .	161
Prosit Neujahr . . . . .	163
Fair Harvard . . . . .	164
College Drinking Song . . . . .	167
Six Wise Fools . . . . .	170
Athletic Ode . . . . .	185
The Bottles and the Wine . . . . .	192
The Poetic Medium . . . . .	198
Young Sammy's first Wild Oats . . . . .	204
Spain in America . . . . .	216
Youth's Immortality . . . . .	232

## A HERMIT OF CARMEL



*Enter a young KNIGHT.*

KNIGHT [*reining in his horse*].

Rest, Albus, rest. — Doth the sun sink in glory

Because he sinks to rise? —

Breathe here a space ; here bends the promontory,

There Acra's haven lies.

Those specks are galleys waiting for the gale

To make for Christian shores.

To-morrow they will fly with bellying sail

And splash of swinging oars,

Bearing us both to where the freeman tills

The plot where he was born,

And belfry answers belfry from the hills

Above the fields of corn.

Thence one less sea to traverse ere we come

Where all our hopes abide,

One truant journey less to end in home,

Thy mistress, and my bride. [*He dismounts.*

Good Albus, 't is enough for one day's riding.

Here shall our bivouac be.

Surely by that green sward some brook is hiding

To welcome thee and me.

Yes, hark ! Its laugh betrays it. Graze thou there,

Nor fear the camp's alarms.

*[Lets the horse go and turns, perceiving the  
cross on the hillside.*

See where a cross, inviting me to prayer,

Outspreads its sacred arms.

O first of many that mine eyes shall see

On altar, tomb, and tower,

Art thou the last of crosses come to me

Before my guerdon's hour ?

Or first or last, and by whatever hands

Here planted in the wild,

Hail to thee, cross, that blessest in far lands

Thy champion and thy child.

*[Goes up to the cross and kneels before it.  
The angel of the Lord appeared to Mary  
And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.*

*[Continues silently.*

## A HERMIT OF CARMEL

SCENE. — *A ravine amid the slopes of Mount Carmel.*

*On one side a hermitage, on the other a rustic cross. The sun is about to set in the sea, which fills the background.*

HERMIT. Thou who wast tempted in the wilderness,  
Guard me this night, for there are snares in sleep  
That baffle watching. O poisoned, bitter life  
Of doubt and longing ! Were death possible,  
Who would not choose it ? But that dim estate  
Might plunge my witless ghost in grosser matter  
And in still closer meshes choke my life.  
Yet thus to live is grievous agony,  
When sleep and thirst, hunger and weariness,

And the sharp goads of thought-awakened lust  
Torture the flesh, and inward doubt of all  
Embitters with its lurking mockery  
Virtue's sad victories. This wilderness  
Whither I fly from the approach of men  
Keeps not the devil out. The treacherous glens  
Are full of imps, and ghosts in moonlit vesture  
Startle the watches of the lidless night.  
The giant forest, in my youth so fair,  
Is now a den of demons ; the hoarse sea  
Is foul with monsters hungry for my soul ;  
The dark and pregnant soil, once innocent  
Mother of flowers, reeks with venomous worms,  
And sore temptation is in all the world.  
But hist ! A sound, as if of clanking hoofs.  
Saint Anthony protect me from the fiend,  
Whether he come in guise of hornèd beast  
Or of pernicious man ! If I must die  
Be it upon this hallowed ground, O Lord !

*[Hides in the hut.]*

HERMIT [*from within*].

All's quiet. God hath made the danger pass.

[*Comes out.*]

Nay, hold ! A horse without a rider here ?

Perchance a devil, come, if I should mount him,

To gallop with me into yawning hell.

Yet he looks gentle, munching the young grass,

The tempting bridle looped about his neck.

I will go catch him. When the traders pass —

And they pass after Christmas — I will barter

The beast for a good cloak. The winter's blasts

Are on us.

KNIGHT. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.*

*Be't done to me according to thy word —*

[*Continues silently.*]

HERMIT. A voice ! A Christian voice ! Some winged

angel

Floats through the ether, magnifying God.

Merciful heaven ! There, ay, there he kneels

Before the cross I planted. 'T is the cross



That to earth brings down heaven. Yes, Saint  
Michael,

For he is clad in arms, and his casque fringed  
With the bright nimbus of his golden hair.  
Yet he seems wingless ; if he stirs a limb  
The heavy armour clangs. No angel, surely ;  
Rather Saint George, with steed and magic lance  
Returned to fight against the infidel.

KNIGHT. *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt  
among us.* [Continues silently.

HERMIT. Listen ! they speak my native tongue in  
heaven.

Those are the words my sainted mother spake —  
Nightly she crooned them, teaching Palmerin  
His orisons. [The KNIGHT rises.

Come, shall I challenge him ?

No : I am foul. I will hide crouching here  
And spy him as he goes.

KNIGHT. What stirreth there ?  
[Pushes a branch aside.

HERMIT [*falling on his knees*].

Have mercy, glorious Saint ! a sinful man

Lives in this hovel ; no man's enemy

Except his own. Sir, spare an anchorite.

KNIGHT. Fear nothing, holy man. I am a Christian

Although no saint, but sinful more than thou

Who in the desert livest near to God.

My sword is stained with blood, my heart is rash,

And if my youth is free from foul dishonour

'Tis God's good mercies hedge my wayward days

And marvellously guide me through the world.

But thou art surely wise. In solitude

The mind of the Most High posseseth men,

And they whom sorrow chaseth from the world

Learn in their grief the purposes of heaven.

God's hand appears in this, that here I find thee

To shrive me, father. Many months I roam

Through heathen wilds in sorry need of shrift.

Who knows if in some luckless fray to-morrow

I bite the dust, or in that golden sea

Perish unknelled and far from Christendom?  
A soldier's soul should be like his bright blade  
Ready to unsheathe.

HERMIT.                    O music of high thoughts!  
O harmony of long-forgotten words!  
Fair visitation! In her youth the soul,  
Gathering the heavy heritage of Adam,  
Looks with strange horror on her own abyss  
And on the stars, and her increasing knowledge  
Ever increaseth sorrow; yet with years,  
Touching the depths and wholly mortified,  
She sees her desert bloom with mystic flowers  
And sweeter smiles of God. O mortal bosom  
Both in foreboding and in hope beguiled!  
Not where I fancied in my night of trouble  
Dawns comfort on mine eyes, but wondrously.  
Whence camest thou? Tell me what princely house  
And fruitful country bred and nurtured thee.  
KNIGHT. 'T is not a fruitful land. On heathered hills  
My father fed his flocks. We gazed not down

On vineyard slopes and waters blue as these  
But there a sea of swaying tree-tops spread  
Boundless beneath us, without path or tower,  
Save where beside the river's bend the monks  
Had built their cells and cleared the wood away.  
We called it milking time when we could hear  
The distant music of their matin chimes.

HERMIT. Be your monks rich?

KNIGHT. Their fields are ploughed and brown,  
But the poor upland shepherd has no corn ;  
His flock must feed him with its milk and flesh,  
Unless he snare a partridge in the wood  
As I did oft, or standing in the brook  
Where the green water eddies in the pool  
Enmesh the foolish fishes.

HERMIT. Never shepherd  
Could bear these arms or show this courtesy.  
Where wast thou bred, if thou wast born a hind,  
That thou art gentle? Who hath knighted thee?

KNIGHT. The Baron of the Marches is my liege ;

To him I owe my nurture and my sword,  
And the sweet hope that leads me.

HERMIT. Ah, the faith?

KNIGHT. Nay, that my mother gave me with her  
prayers,  
Saintliest of women.

HERMIT. Thy mother and my own  
Were then alike. Hast thou another hope  
Sweeter than faith to thank thy master for?

KNIGHT. He hath a daughter for whose hand I serve,  
Having her love ; and on the happy night  
When I kept vigil o'er the virgin arms  
In which I should be knighted at the dawn  
He promised me her hand, if I proved worthy  
In five years' service. At the morrow's mass  
When we had both partaken of the Lord,  
I knelt before him, and while all his vassals  
Stood in a ring about us, up he rose  
And with his flat sword struck my shoulder thus,  
Speaking these words, now graven on my heart :

“ Arise, Sir Knight, to battle with the world  
For God and honour. If in youth thou fall,  
May thy bright soul take instant wing to heaven,  
But if thou blazon on this argent shield  
Valorous deeds, and come in safety back,  
Thy worth shall stand in lieu of ancient blood,  
For valour was the first nobility,  
And with the blessing of a hapless man  
Whom three brave sons, reversing nature's sentence,  
Condemned to mourn them, I will then deliver  
My daughter to thy hands. She and her honour,  
My lands, my castle, and my name be thine.”  
Love is the hope, sweeter than faith in heaven,  
For which I toil in arms.

Enough of that.

Methinks thou art a priest, and ere I leave thee  
I fain would make confession of what sins  
Lie on my soul.

HERMIT.            God knoweth what they are,  
And hath, methinks, forgiven them already,

For by the candour of thy looks I know  
Thou livest in his grace. But tell them o'er,  
For by the speaking of a word the heart  
Is lightened of its burden : and the Lord  
Commissioned us to listen in his name  
To all men's woes, and counsel and forgive.  
Therefore say on.

KNIGHT.                   Alas, where all is frail  
I know not with what sorrow to begin.  
If I could keep the thought of God alive  
I might live better ; but my wit is loose  
And wanders into silly dreams awake,  
All to no purpose. Everything that stirs  
Sets me athinking of its life and ways  
And I forget my own. If a frog jump,  
Or busy squirrel run across my path,  
Or three sad crows fly cawing through the wood,  
Or if I spy a fox's trail, or print  
Of deer's foot in the mould — off go my thoughts  
And I am many leagues in fairy land

Before I shake away the lethargy  
And say to my weak soul, Thou art a knight,  
What hast thou done to-day?

HERMIT. Be these thy sins?

KNIGHT. Nay, not the chief. For in all exercise,  
Or when in any test or feat of arms  
I meet another, not the worthy cause,  
The thought of God, my liege, or beauteous mistress  
Strengthens my arm, but the mere rage and pride  
Of the encounter sweeps my soul along,  
And win I must, whatever goal it be,  
When I am once engaged. That 's in the blood.  
So were our heathen fathers wont to fight  
Merciless battles. But glory is the Lord's  
Who metes with measure. Still I stumble there.  
And envy, too, I often sin in that,  
For from my childhood up I never brooked  
A swifter runner, or a quicker eye  
To hit the mark, and what another does  
Better than I, that still I strive to do



Till he be worsted. Else I cannot sleep.

HERMIT. Thou knowest, child, that victory is God's  
To give and to deny. He gives it thee :  
'T is proof of thy deserving. Use it well,  
Which if thou do, to crave the victory  
In thee, a soldier, is no grievous sin.  
But hast thou not more special sins than these,  
No wrong, no murder?

KNIGHT. Murder have I none,  
If murder be to kill a man by stealth  
Or in a private quarrel, but in war  
I oft have slain my man. I wear a sword  
Though nature gave me not a butcher's hand  
That loves to use it. — Oh, 't is marvellous  
How men will slaughter for the sake of blood,  
And Christians too. Before I crossed the sea,  
The Margrave fought a battle in the north  
Against the heathen. I then followed him,  
And when the fight was over and the foe,  
Routed, had fled into a deep morass

Black 'neath the splendours of a fiery sky,  
The bugle called us back : and back I rode,  
My shield slung on my back, my visor up,  
Saying the Angelus, such peace there was  
Beneath the twilight heavens, when a groan  
That seemed the ending of a soul in pain  
Made me look down ; there lay a heathen knight,  
And on his wounded breast a Christian crouched,  
Stabbing him still ; I snatched the villain's sword,  
But just in time, and seized him by the throat  
Amazed, and loud with oaths ; " Thou slave," quoth I,  
" Why wilt thou send a valiant soul to hell,  
That might be saved for heaven ? The man is mine.  
Take thou his armour, if some happy chance  
Have made thee victor. But outrage not the cause  
Which thou wouldst well defend." We stripped the  
man,

Whose gaping wounds were deep and hard to staunch  
With the few strips remaining of my tunic  
Torn in the fight ; and as he could not sit,

We needs must lift and bear him in our arms  
Back to the camp. He was a knight indeed,  
And when, his fever passing, I explained  
Our holy faith — (our chaplains spoke not well  
His northern tongue) — he listened open-eyed  
As a child might, and when I stopped and asked,  
“Dost thou believe?” he gazed and said: “I do.  
As thou believest, so in life and death  
Will I believe.” — So humble was his soul  
And open to the sudden grace of heaven.  
Yet him my Christian ruffian would have slain  
To see the red blood ooze. ’Tis pitiful!  
And yet I do him wrong. The fellow came  
The morning after, shy, with heavy looks,  
And said he begged to bring the armour back.  
It was not his, he had not felled the knight  
But found him on the ground; and when I bade him  
Retain the proffered sword, to use it better,  
He sobbed aloud, and bathed my hands in tears,  
So hearty was his grief. — But I confess

**They are memorials of her I review**

To make me constant. Nay, but that's not all.  
A heavy season comes, — I know not whether  
At waxing or at waning of the moon, —  
When but the babble of a girlish voice  
Heard from a window, or a hand stretched forth,  
Or a chance motion, stops the beating heart  
Here in my breast, and melts my very soul,  
And I stand there bewitched, my brain benumbed,  
And nothing in me but the fell desire  
To do I know not what. — 'Tis dreams, dreams,  
dreams,  
And they are evil, treacherous, and base  
When they come so. One day on every side  
They girt me round. I cried to them "For shame!"  
They would not go nor quit tormenting me  
Till I put spurs into my steed, and rode,  
Rode with clenched teeth, hacking all branches  
off  
Within my axe's compass. When I stopped  
My soul was free: "We have outridden them,

Albus," I cried, " the demons of that place  
Of foul enchantment ! Here 's the blue again  
Smiling upon us, God, and all his saints."

Father, methinks the agony of death  
May happen so. A stifling darkness comes  
Upon the feeble soul, and doubtfully  
She keeps her strength alive on far-off hopes  
In that great stress of anguish. But it passes  
And slowly we awake in paradise.

HERMIT. In paradise, my son, when thou awakest  
If I still suffer in the lake of fire  
Make me some prayerful alms, who in the name  
Of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
Absolve thee now.

KNIGHT. And for my penance, father,  
What lay you on ?

HERMIT. Three *Aves* for three days  
Say for the soul of one unlike thyself  
Though of thy country. Robbers bore him thence  
Into their kingdoms. Hast thou never heard



KNIGHT. Thy gaze is fixed.

What ails thee? Rest thee there.

HERMIT. I cannot speak.

I faint. Since dawn I have not tasted food.

A draught! A morsel! Ah, my end is near.

KNIGHT. I have a panier by my saddle-bow  
With food. — Albus has wandered down the glade. —

I shall be here anon. *[Exit.]*

HERMIT. What bodes this portent?

My practised soul well knows the things of earth,

And there is none like this. Impossible.

This is some essence metaphysical,

And not the thing it seems. So much is sure;

But whether fiend or minister of grace

How shall I know? Is he a subtle demon

And wins my ear? I am the devil's pawn.

Is he an angel and I put him by?

Then I am damned for that. All other sins

Shall be forgiven, save such blasphemy

Against the Holy Ghost. And being dead



Might not my brother's spirit come from heaven?  
And though I be unworthy in my sins  
Of saintly visitation, I believe  
This vision is from God. 'T is beautiful  
And clothed in Christian speech and charity.  
Was not Mount Carmel, Lord, thy haunt of old  
Where men went up to meet thee? Show thy face.  
The Apostles at Emmaus knew the Lord  
When he broke bread. Blind heart, an angel comes  
To sup with thee to-night. Misknow him not.  
The ravens of Elijah, who were black,  
Came from the Lord, and Raphael himself  
Who led the lost Tobias by the hand  
Was black beside this vision's loveliness.  
Yea, by its glory pale the three bright strangers  
That from the desert came to Abraham's tent  
In figure of the blessed Trinity. —  
What am I raving? Am I Abraham,  
Tobias, or Elijah, that the gods  
Should visit me? Did not the artful devil

Come to Saint Anthony in beauteous form?  
When first this ghost approached I dreaded him, —  
A certain sign. Yet by his subtle wiles,  
Flattering my earthly hopes, he vanquished me  
And quieted my doubts — as if Beelzebub  
Could not feign piety to murder souls!  
What, my young brother, whom I counted dead,  
Found in this shape, a knight, a Paladin,  
A vision such as minstrels sing about?  
Palpable lie, abominable snare  
The demon mocks me with! Let me but cry,  
“I am thy brother, I am Damian,”  
Let me but clasp his knees and with a flood  
Of joyful penitential childish tears  
Water his feet, and then look up again  
To drink the grace of his benignant eyes  
And by his kiss be healed in soul and body,  
And I shall see the grinning demon’s self  
And feel that icy manacle, his claw,  
Clasping my wrist for ever. “Thou art damned,

Damned," shrieks the fiend, "damned in believing  
lies,

Damned in renouncing for a dreamful joy

Thy solitude and penance. Thou art damned."

Yes, 't is a hellish plot confronts me here.

A knight, my brother, come to comfort me !

'T is madness and wild dreams. — Again he comes.

His gesture says, Here 's food. Pitiful heaven,

Assist me now. Let me not now be lost.

Suffer my vigils and perpetual fasts

To strengthen my resolve. To be so happy

Were rash, and ah, how vain ! To drown their sorrow

Fools barter heaven for a drunkard's joy.

*Re-enter KNIGHT.*

KNIGHT. Drink this. 'T is water from the virgin  
springs

Of Carmel, pure and cold. Stains of the world

That leave the heavens clean leave earth's own heart

Immaculate. 'T is but her outer garment

That man and roving beast avail to smear.

The curse of Adam stops at living things  
And Nature sleeps untainted. There is healing  
In such a fountain draught. Taste of this bread.  
Acorns I also bring and well-dried figs.  
Take freely : there is plenteous store for both.  
For often as I ride a village through  
Or tighten as I start from hostelryes  
My horse's girth, the hospitable dame  
Or her young daughter brings me something forth  
From the rich larder, now a loaf or fowl  
And now a goat-skin full of seasoned wine.  
God prompts their kindly hearts and makes them  
bounteous  
Lest my strength fail me ere my journey's end,  
Who knows how distant yet. — Come, break thy fast.  
Remember, father, this is Christmas Eve  
When angels, joining in the songs of earth,  
Make mortals joyful, knowing their painful flesh  
Allied to deity.  
HERMIT. I crave no food.

KNIGHT. Nay, nay, thy faintness called for it but now.

HERMIT. Not hunger gave that cry but wonderment.

KNIGHT. At my poor brother's name?

HERMIT. Thy brother lives.

KNIGHT. Where? Dost thou know him? In this  
Holy Land?

HERMIT. Poor Damian of the Marches! Verily  
His sins are scarlet. Pray for him, fair Knight,  
But seek not to discover his abode.  
If thou shouldst find him he would die of shame  
For bringing shame upon thee.

KNIGHT. Hast thou seen him  
Or is it slander of a gossip's mouth  
That now usurps thy tongue? If he be fallen  
He hath the greater need of charity  
And some late succour.

HERMIT. Through long wanderings  
We never once were parted. In his youth  
I deemed him honest, loved him as myself,  
Nor doubted he should richly thrive and prosper

Amongst the sons of men. But day by day  
The hand of opportunity unmasked  
The sleeping guilt within. Envy and greed,  
Pitiless malice, pride, and wantonness  
Started like lion's cubs that scent their prey  
And roared increasingly. Time drew aside  
Veil after veil that cloaked his villainy,  
Till looking on his stark and naked soul  
I stood aghast and trembled.

**KNIGHT.** God, that made us,  
Engraved his sacred image in our hearts  
Deeper than cruel eyes may boast to pierce.  
Has not my brother too a priceless soul  
For which Christ died? Did God not ransom it?  
Yes, I will find him, lift him to my breast  
And say, "Forget the past. Thy home is here."  
**HERMIT.** Beware ! Didst thou embrace him he would  
die.

And he hath grievous penance yet to do  
Ere he be ripe for heaven. In purgatory

The pains are doubly sharp and manifold  
With which our guilt is cleansed. Forbear to search.

KNIGHT. This ministration is a task that heaven  
Now lays upon me. Hinder not his weal.  
What better battle could approve my courage  
Than in a brother's soul to fight despair?  
If I could bring that brother back to life  
Long dead to me, and dead, it seems, to God,  
Were't not a deed of Christian chivalry  
To win my lady by? Father, I pray thee,  
Where is my brother now?

HERMIT.                                A mystery  
Enshrouds his penance. Vain to question more.  
A secret vow on which salvation hangs  
Lies between him and all men.

KNIGHT. Marvellous !  
Where hath he roamed, what nameless sin committed  
That I may not embrace him?

**HERMIT.** Listen, Knight,  
For I may tell thee that ; and when thou knowest

The sins he shrives and what his penance is,  
Assist him with thy charitable prayers  
To bear his cross, but lift it not away,  
For with it goes his hope of paradise.

KNIGHT. There is indeed some mystery in this.  
The pain of it doth weigh upon thy soul  
Even in the telling.

HERMIT. Did his own pale lips  
Read from the branded tablets of his heart  
The record of his sorrows, they could never  
More truly speak than I, for all his woes  
I knew, and inly felt them as my own.  
Would that some ruffian knife had gashed his throat  
On that foul day of slaughter, when thy mother  
Bore thee afar to safety. Ah, how near  
Salvation hung that day above his head !  
But wondrously, as Isaac once was spared,  
Some voice he heard not stayed the murderous hand,  
Then dealing death abroad ; and from that mercy  
The dreadful brood of all his torments sprang.



They bound his wrists with painful twisted thongs  
And drove him with the flocks and captive women  
Into their camp, across the smouldering heaps  
Of burning rubbish and through sulphurous fumes.  
That night he found him tied behind a cart —  
The crawling palace of that savage chief  
Whose greed had saved him. Shivering he stood,  
For they had stripped him, through the starlight  
hours,  
And found no piteous orb less bright above him  
For looking on his grief. Alas, his soul  
Entered that night into the maze of hell.  
For gazing on those stars and on the corpses  
Of all he loved and knew, mangled and bare,  
Upbraiding heaven with their lidless eyes,  
And heaven's eyes still smiling back at them,  
He said to his cold heart, "There is no God."  
And when the rosy dawn with jocund seeming  
Gilded the valley as if naught had chanced,  
He, like the morning, banished grief and love,

And in his vain and cruel heart repeating  
"There is no God," arose to greet the sun.

They took him to a village by a stream,  
And in the market sold him to a Jew,  
A long-robed man, who stroked thy brother's hair —  
'T was flaxen then and silken as thy own —  
And chuckled as he hurried him away  
Into a galley, by the margin moored.  
They voyaged long, until they reached a vast  
And splendid city. Egypt's sunken shore  
Stretches behind it, and before its walls  
Pharos, by day a pillar and by night  
A flaming beacon, greets the mariner.  
'T is Satan's capital. If holy men  
Have dwelt within it, teaching all the Church,  
That was of old. Now Saracens and Jews  
Possess it wholly. There no Christian thrives,  
But every monstrous and lascivious crime  
Findeth a palace or a den to hide it.  
There did thy brother waste his youth, a slave,

And no unwilling service did he render  
To every base command. His shepherd's skin,  
Ruddy with mountain suns, they smoothed with  
                  unguents,  
And bleached in pillared courts ; they shaved his hair,  
Forbade him labour, save to hold a torch  
While his young masters read, or at the banquet  
To mix the lucent sherbets with the snows  
Of Sinai's deepest gorge, or in the censer  
To drop large incense-grains. He learned to sing  
What songs of wine their ribald poets penned,  
And all the witch of Lesbos raved of love.  
The lute and timbrel in his skilful hands  
They loved to place ; oft in their languid souls  
His wild chant roused some savage memory  
And their hearts leapt like leopards in the night  
That prowl through broad Sahara. His delight  
Was henceforth the choice morsel, the fat fee,  
The subtle theft. He brought the gossip home  
From the loud market, lest his lord should yawn

The morning long beneath the barber's hands,  
Nor praise his wit and to the tittering group  
Repeat his story. In the brothel streets  
He ran sly errands, nor escaped in fear  
If as he passed some wife of Potiphar  
Plucked at his tunic. His best art it was  
To know the cunning mixture of good wines  
And poisons too, if some adulterous slave  
Or long-lived uncle or importunate brother  
Needed a poison.— Close about his soul  
This bitter flood of luxury crept up  
Until it choked him. He forgot the past  
And blushed to be a Christian. Their vain prayers  
He learned to mutter, and was circumcised.  
Thrice in the day, and dawn and noon and eve,  
He washed his feet and hands, a foolish rite  
That left the soul still foul. Twice seven devils  
Lodged in his body and tormented him,  
And lust pursued him when all ways of lust  
Were stale and sickened,

But there came an end.

For by the flesh as he had chiefly sinned,  
So in the flesh he had his punishment.  
Ulcers and boils, to make another Job,  
Thickened upon him, and his beauty gone,  
They drove him like a pest from all their gates  
Among the lepers. Then he called on God.  
Then he remembered all he once had heard  
But understood not touching Calvary ;  
And rising up, all naked as he was,  
He plucked the stout stem of a bramble-bush  
To be his palmer's staff, and with a rag  
That once had been the blanket of a mule  
Girded his loins, and stalked into the wild.  
KNIGHT. And whither, father, whither did he go?  
HERMIT. Mount Sinai first received him, on whose  
crests  
The Lord in the beginning reared his throne,  
And from whose spurs and watered crevices  
The children of Saint Anthony for ever

Pour praise and supplication. There he dwelt,  
Recalling to his troubled memory  
The precepts of the faith ; but from those haunts  
He journeyed soon to deeper solitudes.

KNIGHT. Then he repented and is surely saved ?

HERMIT. God grant it, son, God grant it for thy  
sake.

'T is not a day can change the heart of man,  
Though grace doth much. The ancient demons lurk  
Still in their dark recesses, and at night,  
Or in the idle moments when the soul  
Breathes 'mid her travail, suddenly assail.  
In the vast wilderness the starving eye  
Spies many shapes that feed its lust. To me  
The buzz of bees, the lizard's sunny sleep,  
The snake's lithe coils are full of languishment.  
Oh, how the base blood then assaults the heart  
Crying, " Fool, fool, what were the life of heaven  
Unless in heaven too the sun were warm  
And the blood rose and all the passions flared,

Even as in worms compact of earth and fire  
That lecherously writhe? Their goads and stings  
Are in thy flesh, why not their ravishment? "

They are strange shapes the devil sometimes takes.  
There was a vine that crept along this wall,  
Ancient and knotted ; far its branches spread  
And with their leafy greenness made a bower  
Over my cell. The juicy clusters hung  
Not far above me, and the little birds  
Chirped in the sun-flecked tangle all day long,  
Hopping from twig to twig and carolling.  
I sat and listened, and methought they said :  
" Bad hairy man, thou only in this world  
Repinest, hater of thyself and us,  
Thou art all nature's single enemy."  
And with a doubt that cleft my heart in twain  
I sat and pondered what they sang to me.  
Then I looked up into the sunlit maze  
Of that old vine, I breathed its subtle scent,  
I watched its spotted shadows shift and change

With gusty murmurous tremblings of its leaves  
And eager tendrils, curling through the air,  
Until it seemed as if the thing had life  
And was a devil stooping over me  
With the obsession of his purring breath  
Wooing me to perdition. But I laughed,  
For I had dealt with imps of hell before.  
I searched the stubble till I found two flints,  
Sharp and with something like a cross upon them,  
And straight about the vine's outspreading roots  
Began to dig. A week, methinks, I dug  
With secret joy, well knowing that in vain  
The demon thought to ripen all his grapes.  
His filthy roots, now dangling in the air,  
Dried in the sun. In August fell the leaves,  
And the dead branches with the autumn's flaw  
Rotted and broke ; now, see, they feed my fire.  
And when the Spring returns no silly birds  
Will fret me with their singing. God be praise  
That I could balk that devil : long he mocked



My lonely penance with his evil eye.

But others come anon ; and what I suffer

'T is very like thy brother suffers too.

KNIGHT. I cannot think so, father. Thou art weak

And long hast laid the hopes of youth aside.

Thou canst not love. My brother still is young —

HERMIT. Alas, if grief had multiplied his years !

KNIGHT. He yet can love, and any natural voice

Of wood or mountain, or perchance my own,

Might wake in him another better life

Of peace and happy hopes. We love the forest,

We who were nurtured in its magic depths.

Oft has it seemed as if God spoke to us

In the low voices of the prayerful boughs

That whisper nighest heaven.

HERMIT.

This false world

Is naught, my son, but what we make of it.

KNIGHT. Then I must think my brother loves the

woods

And hears God's message in their murmuring.

Had he dwelt here, a hermit like thyself,  
He would have suffered that old vine to grow  
And those blithe birds to sing. 'T is positive,  
Else other blood than mine must fill his veins.  
Oh, I will find him yet. — I leave thee, father.  
Thou hast with heavy tidings and great hope  
Burdened my soul. Now I must journey on.  
I pray, thy blessing.

HERMIT.                      Kneel, thou happy stranger,  
Kneel, for a vision comes into my heart  
And I must prophesy. Thus saith the Lord :  
“Thou shalt not know thy brother upon earth ;  
My will forbids. But thou shalt pass him by,  
And as Saint Peter's shadow healed a man,  
The passing of thee, by my grace and mercy,  
Shall save thy brother's soul.” This comfort take  
And go thy ways.

KNIGHT.                      The will of God be done.  
If not on earth, we yet may meet in heaven.

HERMIT. God grant it.

KNIGHT. May God keep thee.

HERMIT. Fare thee well.

KNIGHT [*sings as he goes*].

*The star stood still o'er Bethlehem  
That showed the wise the way,  
And where the shepherds sleeping lay  
The angels sang to them :  
Glory be to God on high  
And peace on earth to men.*

HERMIT. Lord of Mount Carmel, hearken to my  
prayer.

God of the hills, accept my sacrifice.

## THE KNIGHT'S RETURN



## THE KNIGHT'S RETURN

A SEQUEL TO A HERMIT OF CARMEL

SCENE.— *A wooded lawn before the gate of a castle.*

*In an arbour* LADY FLERIDA *and* NURSE *at their handiwork.*

NURSE. The dews will soon be falling, Florida.  
Come in, sweet lady.

FLERIDA. Hush ! 'T is early yet.

NURSE. 'T is time, methinks, to say the rosary.

FLERIDA. See the sun hanging o'er the darkened hills  
Bright as the Host above the multitude  
Of bending worshippers ! Tell thy beads here,  
The congregation of these rustling leaves  
Will answer all thy *Aves* patiently.

NURSE. I've dropped a stitch. I cannot see to work  
'Neath trellises. These gentlefolk are mad.  
The mistress of a castle sits without,  
Like a poor homeless beggar !

FLERIDA. Nay, go in  
And burn thy rush-light while the sun is shining,  
Or, by the casement squinting, knit thy hose  
While in these gilded clouds the seraphim  
Are singing Glory. Go, I follow thee.

NURSE [*getting up to go*].

Alack, this rheum. Young bones will brave the cold  
Till the twitch comes. — Trust me, 't is hazardous,  
Sweet child, to tarry here beyond the moat  
Alone, when evening falls. Once at thy age  
My mother sent me on a night like this  
To good old Prior Bennet, at Saint Giles.  
He was her uncle and a saintly man —  
How well do I remember his grey beard ! —  
She went to him for shrift, and on that day  
She had a fainting turn : she had them oft

Till in the last, poor sainted soul, she died.  
I needs must run and fetch him, for to die  
Unreconciled was all my mother feared,  
And but for that, she had so hard a life  
She would have changed it any day for heaven,  
And on the way ('t was scarce a rood from home)  
An idle foul young lout that sauntered by  
Griped at my frock — I tremble at it still —  
Thank God, the Virgin willed that at the trice  
Friar Peter (he was porter all that month)  
Opened the gate to let two pilgrims out,  
Bound, as they told us, for Jerusalem.  
Else Heaven knows what had become of me,  
Or whether I had ever had the face  
To cheat my husband, as most wenches do,  
Without confessing aught : for I am honest  
If ever woman was.

FLERIDA.

Go in, go in.

NURSE. Seest thou not I go? Can I make  
haste



With these poor aching joints? Thou think'st thee  
safe?

Remember Ulric in his dungeon plans  
Vengeance upon you, and his friends abroad  
Hatch plans for his deliverance. Thou a maid,  
An orphan, friendless, with these ill-paid men  
Guarding thy walls, what dost thou fading here?  
Who knows but he is dead, thy pretty knight?  
His time is up. Were he alive and true  
He had spurred home, hearing thy father's death,  
To claim thee and make good his heritage.  
Fie on this fondness, girl! It had been wiser  
To yield to Ulric. Was it not his place  
To guard thee? Led he not thy father's men?  
Ah, better be his wife, rich, safe, and loved,  
Than wait for ever among enemies  
For what will never come.

FLERIDA.

Poor soul, go in.

The five years are not passed, and if they were  
And I had ocular proof that he was dead,

Ulric should not be master in these walls.  
But I should open arches in the tower  
For bells to swing in, and the grass should grow  
Upon the buried hinges of the draw.  
Veiled we should walk within the garden-close,  
And in the dimmed hall chant our psalmodes  
With the frail voice of nuns. So get thee gone,  
And summon better counsel to thy heart  
Than quavers on thy lips. Go light thy taper,  
And pray for the safe-coming of thy liege.  
NURSE. I go. But thou, sweet lady, linger not.  
The victuals will grow cold, as many a night  
They have, since summer makes the twilight long  
And thou com'st late to supper. — Ah, poor bones !  
[*Exit.*

FLERIDA.

Day wanes : full summer 's hanging in the air.

Oh, tarry not, my own.

See ! the first withered leaf is fallen there

And I am here alone.

Hath not my sorrow magic o'er thy breast?

Hath not my weary plight

The wings of love to fly into thy nest

And reach thee in the night?

Come to me, Palmerin. Thy trial's o'er,

Thy knightly vow fulfilled.

Come before winter chokes the ways, before

My inmost soul is chilled.

Where dost thou wander? From what lonely moor

Dost thou salute this sun?

Forget'st thou in gay courts what I endure?

Lov'st thou some happier one?

Weak woman! Can my doubting heart not wait

While his true heart can fight?

Why should I falter while he fronts his fate,

Or mourn while he doth right?

Keep him, great world, till the white shield he bore

Be blazoned rich in pride.

Fear not to echo, deserts, he's no more,

If he have nobly died.

*Re-enter NURSE ; later HUGH, a page.*

NURSE. Run hither quickly, mistress. Hasten in  
And bid them raise the bridge. Some horsemen  
climb

The western hill. Make haste, or all is lost.

Young Hugh espied them from the northern tower,  
And gave us warning.

FLERIDA. Heaven hears my prayer.

NURSE. Madness. Come in. I prithee hasten, Hugh.

She 'll take thy word, though she mistrusts my oath

Who never lied to her in all these years

That I have served her, and her mother, too,

Long before she was thought of. Speak, boy, speak.

Assure thy mistress that a host arrives.

HUGH. A single knight, my lady, clad in arms.

FLERIDA. Young, with fair locks?

HUGH. He had his helmet on.

FLERIDA. Saw'st thou his shield?

HUGH. It bore a rich device,

But what I know not.

---

PALMERIN. Ah, thy father —

How long have we been orphaned, Florida?

FLERIDA. Ten moons have shed their light upon his  
grave.

PALMERIN. Oh, more than father —

FLERIDA. And thou more than son

Wast ever to him. He remembered thee

With his last breath, and bade me, when thou camest,

Render his arms, his vassals, and his towers

Into thy hand. My lord, receive the keys. [*Kneels.*

PALMERIN [*raising her*].

How gladly, if these keys unlock thy heart,

Dear lady. For my prize is not these walls,

Nor these stout men and honourable arms.

'T was not for them I served the Emperor

In many a battle waged in heathen lands.

'T was in the hope of what no strength of arm

Nor kingly favour, without grace of thine,

Could win for any man. If thou canst love me,

I take all else to do thee homage with ;

May well be patient now. Here let him find me  
Where last we parted, at the castle gate.

*Re-enter HUGH, men-at-arms, and attendant, bearing  
some pieces of armour.*

NURSE. Oh, I must weep for joy! See, where he  
comes,

Not so much changed but I should know him still  
Among a thousand. Such a pretty child  
As the knight was, and such a roguish boy!  
Can this be Palmerin? Who could have fancied  
That he should ever be this stalwart man?

*Enter SIR PALMERIN, who, seeing the lady FLERIDA,  
who remains motionless, goes to kneel before her.*

PALMERIN. Lady, hast thou forgotten Palmerin?

FLERIDA. Were memory dead, that voice would  
waken it.

PALMERIN. What mean these weeds, these arms?

FLERIDA. That thou, my liege,  
Art master in this castle.

Ah, thy father —

## How long have we been orphaned, Florida?

FLERIDA. Ten moons have shed their light upon his grave.

PALMERIN. Oh, more than father —

And thou more than son

Wast ever to him. He remembered thee

With his last breath, and bade me, when thou camest.

Render his arms, his vassals, and his towers

Into thy hand. My lord, receive the keys. [*Kneels.*

PALMERIN [*raising her*].

How gladly, if these keys unlock thy heart,

Dear lady. For my prize is not these walls,

Nor these stout men and honourable arms.

'Twas not for them I served the Emperor

In many a battle waged in heathen lands.

'Twas in the hope of what no strength of arm

Nor kingly favour, without grace of thine,

Could win for any man. If thou canst love me,

I take all else to do thee homage with ;

But if thy heart, in my long absence won  
By some more worthy suitor, would withdraw,  
Keep the rest too, for to be wretched in  
I have this whole vast world for heritage.

FLERIDA. My hand and heart my father plighted thee  
Upon the morning when he dubbed thee knight.  
Both shall be true. If other ground were lacking,  
My father's choice were ground enough for love.

PALMERIN. Nay, let not duty and thy father's will  
Force thee to wed me. Bid thy heart pronounce.

FLERIDA. A holy love is not the fancy's choice.

A mother cherishes the child she bore,  
Nature's dear gift, bestowed with many a pang  
And weary vigil and sweet fluttering joy  
That flies over a sea of brooding care.  
A father is not chosen but revered,  
For God appointed him. 'Tis destiny,  
And no man's wayward will, binds brothers, kindred,  
And childhood's friends in everlasting bonds.  
Our native land we chose not, nor our king,



Nor our first sovereign, God. All sacred ties  
Are woven round us by the hand of heaven  
And therefore bear us up. Let homeless traitors  
Reject their lot, like fallen Lucifer  
Wretched 'neath every sky ; let the false rabble  
Change with the moon its despicable chiefs ;  
Let the vain fop and goaded libertine  
Pick their poor pleasures, and adulterous spirits  
Pursue a phantom down the drifts of hell.  
But we will breathe the air that quickened us  
And see by this same light that gave us eyes,  
Here rooted where God sowed us, flowering here  
Where we have grown, making our constancy  
A pivot for this wheeling universe.  
Ah ! 't is a fickle and unholy fondness  
Springs from caprice of will. Who doteth once  
May dote again, for who shall fetter fancy ?  
As thou couldst bare thy breast to fortune's arrows  
Undaunted, for thy hope was all in God  
And life or death must crown it, so my bosom,

Enshrining his good gifts, is satisfied  
And cannot speak again. Him heaven gave me  
Shall be my lord and my unchangeable love.

PALMERIN. O constant lady! Let me then thank  
heaven,

That graced me with the treasure of thy troth.  
Rejoice with me, my comrades. Say no more  
That time has parted us, and devious chances  
Governed our lives. How now, is this good Carl?  
And little Hugh, so grown? And thou, old gossip,  
Goes thy rheum better now the season warms?  
But where is Ulric?

FLERIDA. Thou shalt know anon.  
First bid the people give us leave awhile.

PALMERIN. Make ready, then; we follow you.

*[Exeunt all save PALMERIN and FLERIDA.]*

Dear saint,

Is this a vision or a waking truth  
In which I see thee, smiling on my hopes,  
As only visions smile on Jack-a-dreams?

How often have I dreamt between two battles  
Thou stoodest thus above me in the dusk  
Half joy, half courage !

FLERIDA.                               Haply 't was my prayer,  
For prayer hath wings to travel in the night.

PALMERIN. Didst thou remember

FLERIDA.                               Not as others pray.  
What need of blessings to protest I loved thee,  
When benediction rose with every breath  
From my dumb heart to thee? Awake, adream,  
In woodland rambles or in household tasks,  
I moved in thy love's presence as in God's,  
One deity to me.

PALMERIN.                           How undeserving,  
Fair angel, are my merits of thy love !  
How could I win it !

FLERIDA.                           Ah, if God can love thee,  
Why should a mortal give a cause for love?

PALMERIN. They say God loves us all.

FLERIDA.                               Such pitying love

Is his alone who knows the unsullied spirit  
Shrouded at birth beneath this fleshly coil,  
And can divine the stature of that virtue  
Each yet might climb to. But in thee declared  
Shine, Palmerin, the hopes of all the world.  
What God beheld and destined when he called thee  
Out of the void, he granted me to see  
First through the haze of maiden dreams and now  
With the deep glance of woman.

PALMERIN.

Then in sooth

'T was no vain fancy, as the learned say,  
That made thy silent presence cross my path  
Where'er I turned, for if I slept my dream  
Painted thy smile, and when the vision fled  
The sunlit fountain met me with thy gaze.  
If the birds chirruped, it was *Flerida*,  
And *Flerida* if any minstrel sang.  
Thy mien was in the lilies, the thin clouds  
Contrived thy garments' fashion, and thy courage  
Breathed from the mountains to renew my soul.



And taught thy blithe soul singing.

PALMERIN.

Flerida,

Though I should give thee all my life and blood,

My honour and immortal soul, 't were nothing

But what thou gavest first, and rendering all

I yet should owe thee this sweet privilege

Of having lived and loved thee.

*Re-enter* NURSE.

NURSE.

Loitering still?

Come, come, the supper 's spoiling.

FLERIDA [*pointing to the castle*]. Wilt thou take

Possession of thy poor inheritance?

PALMERIN. 'Tis poor indeed, a case without its  
jewel,

Till thou be mine.

FLERIDA.

Thou hast my plighted troth.

PALMERIN. Ah, pay the debt! my heart has waited  
long.

FLERIDA. No priest is in attendance, Palmerin.

Till one be duly summoned and arrive

I am my father's hostage in thy hands  
Entrusted to thy love and chivalry.

PALMERIN. I long have bivouacked, lady, 'neath the  
stars,

And I shall better rest beneath their light  
While I am still an exile from thy bosom.  
Let me not change the canopy of heaven  
Except for heaven's self. Before this shrine  
I watched my virgin arms on the proud eve  
Of my first knighting. On this prouder vigil  
Let me hold silent session with my heart  
Again before this altar, keeping watch  
Over this sweeter boon, my virgin bride  
To be to-morrow mine.

FLERIDA [*to the NURSE*]. Bid them bring hither  
Some wine and morsels for Sir Palmerin,  
And torches, and their lutes and dulcimers.

[*Exit NURSE.*]

PALMERIN. We sup to-night beneath a lovers' moon  
Not quite at full.

FLERIDA.           We sup beneath the stars  
That never wane, though nether storms obscure  
Their revolutions to the wistful eyes  
Of mortals.   So our love shall never wane  
But when its fame on earth is heard no more,  
Translated to the language of the skies,  
It yet shall be a parcel of that joy  
Which saves the world from baseness.

*Attendants with torches and musical instruments  
enter, while others bring in supper.*

## SONG.

*Come make thy dwelling here  
Where all sweet pleasures are.  
For many a weary year  
From mates and lady dear  
Thou wanderest afar.  
Come make thy dwelling here  
Beneath love's golden star.*



*The battles' stress is o'er*

*That should thy worth approve.*

*Oh, follow now no more*

*The ruby star of war*

*That onward still must move.*

*Fixed shines above thy door*

*The golden star of love.*

PALMERIN.

Flerida,

What solace had thy orphaned life for thee

In this fair desert? Was not Ulric here

To lend thee succour?

FLERIDA.

He was here, alas !

PALMERIN. Alas?

FLERIDA.

That he proved false.

PALMERIN.

I marvel. Speak.

FLERIDA. Ah me ! A sorry tale. — He said the castle

As to my father's second came to him ;

That I within it, as the world would think,

Must be his also. Doubtless thou wast dead,

Else tidings would have come. To save my honour  
I must not wait, but bend to be his wife.

PALMERIN. Said Ulric so, that brave and trusty man?  
Only some madness could transform his soul  
So utterly.

FLERIDA. I question not the cause,  
I mark the deed and brand the infamy.  
When he had spoken and beheld me firm,  
The coward threatened force. We were alone  
And he unarmed ; it was a woman's body,  
Not a man's soul, he thought to cope withal.  
My father's sword was hanging by the wall :  
I drew the blade, and as he rushed to snatch it  
Transfixed his body ; at my feet he fell  
Writhing ; I cried for help. Then Gunther came  
And the young Hugh. I published his offence,  
And when the torment and the fever passed,  
For my poor strength had left some breath in him,  
Fettered and manacled they brought him forth  
Into the hall, before my men-at-arms

And the red witness of his own foul blood  
Staining the hearthstone ; and I spoke and said :  
“ Unhappy Ulric, traitor to thy liege,  
Whom on the cross thou tookest oath to serve,  
Thou shalt await his sentence. When he comes  
He shall know all and will decree thy forfeit.  
But if he come not, thou shalt live in chains  
Till God and death restore thy liberty.”

PALMERIN. Is he still captive ?

FLERIDA. In the northern tower,  
Whence Hugh but now, whom Christian charity  
Prompts oft to visit our sad prisoner,  
Saw thee approach. Ulric has heard the news.

PALMERIN. Let him be brought.

FLERIDA [*to the men-at-arms*]. You hear my lord's  
command. —

Ah, Palmerin, when Christ returns to earth  
Only the good shall welcome him ; thy coming  
Will bring thy faithless servant also joy,  
For I foresee thy sentence.

PALMERIN.

To be merciful

Is to be truly just. — Has he not mended

Or purged his sin in his captivity?

FLERIDA. Indeed, it seems he has. Hugh and the  
friar

Who daily visits him both bring report

Of many pious and profound discourses

With which he charms away his solitude.

God grant his wisdom may outlive its cause

And not forsake him now. For, see, he comes.

*Re-enter the men-at-arms, leading in ULRIC, bound.*

PALMERIN. Ulric, it wounds my soul to see thee thus.

Undo the fetters.

[ULRIC is freed.]

What has chanced I know.

'T were idle to rehearse that history.

Only one matter, past my understanding,

I ask thee to confess: how came thy soul

To harbour thoughts so opposite to thine

And do thy nobleness this injury?

ULRIC. Alas! The saddest sorrow of the world

Is not foul sin, but that resplendent virtue  
That yet brings evil on. 'T was nothing base,  
Hideous, ignoble, or contemptible  
That led me to my ruin, but the might  
Of perfect sweetness, joy unthinkable,  
And infinite deserts ; it was the hunger  
For what most truly merits to be loved.  
'T was love, my lord, the love of Florida  
Which, in thy bosom waking heaven's choirs,  
Brought hell into my breast. Was not her face  
As fair for me as thee to look upon?  
Was not her silver voice and high discourse  
Potent with reason on my listening ears?  
Why was it criminal in me to love  
And in thee lawful? For we both were men,  
And I the elder and the better born,  
Who might have wooed and won her worthily.  
Yet with no other crime than lucklessness,  
Because her father and her constant soul  
Lit first on thee, the tempest of my love

Wrecked honour, faith, fame, life, and hope of heaven,  
Which, had the winds blown gently on my fortunes,  
The self-same love had blessed and glorified.

PALMERIN. I pity thee ; but summon not thy love  
To shield thy shame. Hadst thou been fortunate,  
Should I with cunning and outrageous hand  
Have moved against thy peace? Nay, by God's  
mercy,

I should have gone my way, and patiently  
In other worlds have justified my soul ;  
For sorrow more religiously than love  
Counseleth mortals.

ULRIC. Ah, I loved too much.

PALMERIN. Thou sayest well, Too much. Not that  
thy love

In sweetness or in silent potency  
Of grief surpassed or mine or any man's.  
But finding in thy spirit no defence,  
Love fattened on thy reason, drank thy will,  
And quite consumed thy being ; growing great,

It left thee little, as, when a fiery wind  
Devours the stubble, both together perish  
And all goes out in shame. Water these ashes,  
Ulric, with warm and consecrated tears,  
That haply some new sweetness thence arise  
Beneath another heaven. Though thou leave us,  
Our hearts will not forget thee. In thy prayers  
Remember us, and use thy freedom well.  
ULRIC. I thank thee for thy counsel and thy mercy,  
Generous knight. Not comfortless I go,  
For not thy lips alone, well catechised,  
Forgive me, Palmerin : thy heart forgives.  
I would not use my freedom now to rove  
But to ascend. A cloister's little earth  
Is covered by the whole wide firmament.  
Being changed within, there let me live and die  
An anchorite, that I may outwardly  
Become a breathing symbol and a hand  
Pointing to heaven, become a lamp of love  
And keep my spirit's sacrificial flame

Burning before the altar, till my blood,  
Its living oil, to light refine its fire  
And rise, by prayer transmuted, from this world.  
And at this parting let me bless thee, lady,  
Angel God chose to save me from my sin  
Even by tempting me. For in the storm  
And fury of my madness thy calm eyes  
That unaware had called me, as the moon  
Summons the leaping sea to follow her,  
Soon with quick bolt and soul-transfixing ire  
Awaked me from my dream. For who was I,  
That I should lift me to so pure a being  
Except in adoration, as the wave  
That mirrors in its slimy breast the glory  
Of some clear star, soon, grateful for that light,  
Sinks, moaning, to its restless element.  
So moaned I, in my dungeon's loneliness  
And in that larger solitude, the world,  
Where now no joy remained to beckon me.  
I cried to Nature, questioned sun and moon,



At my cell's bars celestial visitants ;  
Yes, I importuned my own soul to tell me  
Whether a man be born to look on good  
And straightway perish. Long I questioned fate.  
No answer came from heaven to my doubts ;  
But with the Spring and the reviving note  
Of thrush and swallow, and the ploughman's song  
Heard from the fields, I somewhat calmed my griefs,  
And my heart took new counsel. Though a wave  
Mirror a star and sink into the sea,  
It cannot suffer ; though the summer fade  
It shivers not at autumn ; though the spheres  
Crash back to chaos they lament it not.  
Never the blasted deserts of the moon  
Mourned their lost verdure or implored reprieve.  
But my loud heart-beats, self-contemplative,  
Note their own weariness, and death foreknown  
Makes life a grim and halting agony.  
Yet something in me rides on circumstance  
And swims the tide of change. How should that die

Which knows its dying, or that pine and fade  
Which marks the shrivelled leafage of the year?  
Can ashes choke that voice to lying silence  
Which once has said : I love? That truth must live  
Though unremembered, and that splendour shine  
Though all eyes close in sleep. When first I loved  
thee

Something immortal darted through my flesh  
And made me godlike. Henceforth all of me  
That loved thee, all of thee my puissant love  
Hedging with worship rescued from the void  
Lives in eternity, a part of God,  
Who feeds with earth's unquenchable desire  
The skies' ethereal altar, to whose flame  
Passions are brands, thoughts smoke and frank-  
incense,

Nations and worlds unceasing hecatombs.  
There, growing one with all that ravished me,  
I also burn and never cease from love.  
Farewell, sweet lady. For thy pity thanks,

More thanks for thy disdain, but for thy beauty  
Infinite thanks, for it was infinite  
And, while it blinded most, unsealed mine eyes.  
FLERIDA. Go in God's peace, and may he grant thee  
                  grace

To see him always. [Exit ULRIC.

Palmerin, this night  
Brings me a surfeit and a cloud of joys.  
I cannot seize them all. But many days  
Will suck their drop of sweetness from this store,  
And many silent nights and absences  
Feed on its garnered bliss.

NURSE. What, prattling still?

You 'll catch the ague and the chill of the fens,  
And lolling in the moonlight, talking love,  
You 'll die before the wedding. Come along.

PALMERIN. Sleep, Flerida, falls sweetly on a heart  
Freed from long doubt and anguish. Take thy rest.  
Palmerin watches at thy castle gates  
And all is well. Sleep, sleep, my Flerida.

FLERIDA. Let me gaze long upon thee ere I go,  
Lest, waking, I believe that I have dreamt  
And weep anew and be disconsolate.

PALMERIN. Ah, were I only lying by thy side  
At the first checking of thy peaceful breath,  
To chase away that doubt before it grieved thee  
And with two kisses close thy dreamful eyes !  
Alas that we should meet to part, and love  
Only to be divided !

FLERIDA. Palmerin,  
Though thou hast faced the world and conquered it,  
Thy noble heart is young. My briefer years  
And lonely life have farther traced the thread  
By which fate guides us through this labyrinth.  
To learn to part, to learn to be divided,  
We meet and love on earth ; to learn to die  
Is the one triumph of the life of prayer.  
Shall love be but to hug the mother's breast,  
Or else run wailing ? To prolong for ever  
The lovers' kiss, or pine for blandishments ?

Is the Lord's body but unleavened bread  
Weighed with a baker's measure, or his blood  
Wine to be drunk in bumpers? And shall love  
Be reckoned in embraces, and its grace  
Die with the taking of its sacrament?  
These be but symbols to the eye of time  
Of secrets written in eternity.  
The love that fed must wean the nourished soul,  
And through the dark and narrow vale of death  
Send forth the lover lone but panoplied.  
Else life were vain and love a moment's trouble  
That, passing, left untenanted the void,  
As summer winds a-tremble in this bower  
Might waft some fragrance from a rifled rose  
Through yonder gulf of night and nothingness.  
Hadst thou in battle fallen, were my soul  
Bereft of Palmerin? Or had I languished,  
Would Florida have mocked thy constancy?  
Banish such thoughts, dear master of my being,  
From thy immortal soul. These fond enchantments

Make the sweet holiday and youth of love ;  
They are a largess and bright boon of heaven  
To sweeten our resolves. But youth will fade,  
And death, not mowing with a two-edged scythe,  
Will cut down one and leave the other bowing  
Before the wintry wind. Arm not with terror  
That swift, unheralded, insidious foe,  
But let him find our love invulnerable  
And our heart's treasure in eternal hands.  
My lord, good-night. To-day my joy is full,  
To God I leave to-morrow. Fare thee well.  
PALMERIN [*kneeling to kiss the hand she gives him*].  
Good-night, my own. May angels guard thy  
slumber —

FLERIDA. And share thy vigil —

PALMERIN.

Till my angel come.

[*Exit FLERIDA, followed by her household.*

*As they go, some voices repeat snatches  
of the previous song: "Come make thy  
dwelling here," etc.*

PALMERIN [*alone*].

No, Palmerin, unbuckle not thy arms,

Guard well thy lady's sleep.

Haply the wizards of the wood have charms

To make a virgin weep.

All goblin sprites and fairies of the trees

That lead their impish dance

Will spy thy mantle's cross ; their blood will freeze

To see a Christian lance.

Hark ! the old croaking frogs, and the far din

Of crickets in the field.

They bid me welcome home. " Hie, Palmerin,

Once of the argent shield,

" What 's this device ? Is Florida this flower,

And these five pearls her tears,

Shed for thy love in her disconsolate bower

These five unhappy years ?

“Those sable bars athwart a field of gules,  
Are they thy nights and days  
Spent mid bluff captains and rash drunken fools  
In marches, bouts, and frays?”

Ay, ye chirp well, if I divine your note,  
Ye civil, croaking elves !  
A foolish master have your fields and moat  
And your so learned selves.

Nothing he knows of wit or bookish lore  
And nothing of the fair,  
Only to break the brutal front of war  
And half repeat a prayer.

Yet this sad wight is he, as fairies know,  
Whom Florida hath blest,  
Soon locked within her arms. She long ago  
Was locked within his breast,



Celestial Florida, whom all the hours  
Adorning from her birth  
Have crowned the queen of stars, the queen of flowers,  
The queen of maids on earth.

Her peerless heart hath chosen him her lord,  
The rare intrepid maid,  
Whose tender hand incarnadined a sword  
Lest he should be betrayed.

Out of his nothingness her bounteous love  
Bred all his poor desert  
As God lent to the void he made us of  
His image for a heart.

Like to the dateless dark before our birth  
Are those five winters past,  
This vigil like the twilight life of earth,  
Then paradise at last

## THE KNIGHT'S RETURN

81

And changeless love. How in the paling skies

The star of morning burns !

Open, heaven's gates ! Eternal sun, arise !

Sir Palmerin returns.



## ELEGIAC AND LYRIC POEMS



## PREMONITION

THE muffled syllables that Nature speaks  
Fill us with deeper longing for her word ;  
She hides a meaning that the spirit seeks,  
She makes a sweeter music than is heard.

A hidden light illumines all our seeing,  
An unknown love enchants our solitude.  
We feel and know that from the depths of being  
Exhales an infinite, a perfect good.

Though the heart wear the garment of its sorrow  
And be not happy like a naked star,  
Yet from the thought of peace some peace we borrow,  
Some rapture from the rapture felt afar.

Our heart strings are too coarse for Nature's fingers

To wake her purest melodies upon,

And the harsh tremor that among them lingers

Will into sweeter silence die anon.

We catch the broken prelude and suggestion

Of things unuttered, needing to be sung ;

We know the burden of them, and their question

Lies heavy on the heart, nor finds a tongue.

Till haply, lightning through the storm of ages,

Our sullen secret flash from sky to sky,

Glowing in some diviner poet's pages

And swelling into rapture from this sigh.

## SOLIPSISM

I COULD believe that I am here alone,  
And all the world my dream ;  
The passion of the scene is all my own,  
And things that seem but seem.

Perchance an exhalation of my sorrow  
Hath raised this vaporous show,  
For whence but from my soul should all things  
borrow  
So deep a tinge of woe ?

I keep the secret doubt within my breast  
To be the gods' defence,  
To ease the heart by too much ruth oppressed  
And drive the horror hence.



O sorrow that the patient brute should cower  
And die, not having sinned !  
O pity that the wild and fragile flower  
Should shiver in the wind !

Then were I dreaming dreams I know not of,  
For that is part of me  
That feels the piercing pang of grief and love  
And doubts eternally.

But whether all to me the vision come  
Or break in many beams,  
The pageant ever shifts, and being's sum  
Is but the sum of dreams.

## SYBARIS

LAP, ripple, lap, Icarian wave, the sand  
Along the ruins of this piteous land ;  
Murmur the praises of a lost delight,  
And soothe the aching of my starvèd sight  
With sheen of mirrored beauties, caught aright.

Here stood enchanted palaces of old,  
All veinèd porphyry and burnished gold ;  
Here matrons and slight maidens sat aloof  
Beneath cool porches, rich with Tyrian woof  
Hung from the carven rafters of the roof.

Here in the mart a swarthy turbaned brave  
Showed the wrought blade or praised the naked slave.

“Touch with your finger-tips this edge of steel,”  
Quoth he, “and see this lad, from head to heel  
Like a bronze Cupid. Feel, my masters, feel.”

Here Aphrodite filled with frenzied love  
The dark recesses of her murmurous grove.  
The doves that haunted it, the winds that sighed,  
Were souls of youths that in her coverts died,  
And hopes of heroes strewed her garden wide.

Under her shades a narrow brazen gate  
Led to the courts of Ares and of Fate.  
Who entered breathed the unutterable prayer  
Of cruel hearts, and death was worshipped there,  
And men went thence enfranchised by despair.

Here the proud athlete in the baths delayed,  
While a cool fountain on his shoulders played,  
Then in fine linen swathed his breast and thighs,  
And silent, myrtle-crowned, with serious eyes,  
Stepped forth to list the wranglings of the wise.

A sage stalked by, his ragged mantle bound  
About his brows ; his eyes perused the ground ;  
He conned the number of the cube and square  
Of the moon's orb ; his horny feet and bare  
Trampled the lilies carpeting the stair.

A jasper terrace hung above the sea  
Where the King supped with his beloved three :  
The Libyan chanted of her native land  
In raucous melody, the Indian fanned,  
And the huge mastiff licked his master's hand.

Below, alone, despairing of the gale,  
A crouching sailor furled the saffron sail ;  
Then rose, breathed deep, and plunged in the lagoon.  
A mermaid spied his glistening limbs : her croon  
Enticed him down ; her cold arms choked him soon.

And the King laughed, filled full his jewelled bowl,  
And drinking cried : " What know we of the soul ?

What number addeth to her harmony  
These drops of vintage that attune her key,  
Or those of brine that set the wretched free?

“ If death should change me, as old fables feign,  
Into some slave or beast, to purge with pain  
My lordly pleasures, let my torment be  
Still to behold thee, Sybaris, and see  
The sacred horror of thy loves and thee.

“ Be thou my hell, my dumb eternal grief,  
But spare thy King the madness of belief,  
The brutish faith of ignorant desire  
That strives and wanders. Let the visible fire  
Of beauty torture me. That doom is higher.

“ I wear the crown of life. The rose and gem  
Twine with the pale gold of my diadem.  
Nature, long secret, hath unveiled to me  
And proved her vile. Her wanton bosoms be  
My pillow now. I know her, I am free.”

He spoke, and smiling stretched a languid hand,  
And music burst in mighty chords and bland  
Of harp and flute and cymbal. — When between  
Two cypresses the large moon rose, her sheen  
Silvered the nymphs' feet, tripping o'er the green.

## AVILA

AGAIN my feet are on the fragrant moor  
Amid the purple uplands of Castile,  
Realm proudly desolate and nobly poor,  
Scorched by the sky's inexorable zeal.

Wide desert where a diadem of towers  
Above Adajar hems a silent town,  
And locks, unmindful of the mocking hours,  
Her twenty temples in a granite crown.

The shafts of fervid light are in the sky,  
And in my heart the mysteries of yore.  
Here the sad trophies of my spirit lie :  
These dead fulfilled my destiny before.

Like huge primeval stones that strew this plain,  
    Their nameless sorrows sink upon my breast,  
And like this ardent sky their cancelled pain  
    Smiles at my grief and quiets my unrest.

For here hath mortal life from age to age  
    Endured the silent hand that makes and mars,  
And, sighing, taken up its heritage  
    Beneath the smiling and inhuman stars.

Still o'er this town the crested castle stands,  
    A nest for storks, as once for haughty souls ;  
Still from the abbey, where the vale expands,  
    The curfew for the long departed tolls,

Wafting some ghostly blessing to the heart  
    From prayer of nun or silent Capuchin,  
To heal with balm of Golgotha the smart  
    Of weary labour and distracted sin.



What fate has cast me on a tide of time  
    Careless of joy and covetous of gold,  
What force compelled to weave the pensive rhyme  
    When loves are mean, and faith and honour old,

When riches crown in vain men's sordid lives,  
    And learning chokes a mind of base degree?  
What wingèd spirit rises from their hives?  
    What heart, revolting, ventures to be free?

Their pride will sink and more ignobly fade  
    Without memorial of its hectic fire.  
What altars shall survive them, where they prayed?  
    What lovely deities? What riven lyre?

Tarry not, pilgrim, but with inward gaze  
    Pass daily, musing, where their prisons are,  
And o'er the ocean of their babble raise  
    Thy voice in greeting to thy changeless star.

Abroad a tumult, and a ruin here ;  
Nor world nor desert hath a home for thee.  
Out of the sorrows of the barren year  
Build thou thy dwelling in eternity.

Let patience, faith's wise sister, be thy heaven,  
And with high thoughts necessity alloy.  
Love is enough, and love is ever given,  
While fleeting days bring gift of fleeting joy.

The little pleasures that to catch the sun  
Bubble a moment up from being's deep,  
The glittering sands of passion as they run,  
The merry laughter and the happy sleep,—

These are the gems that, like the stars on fire,  
Encrust with glory all our heaven's zones ;  
Each shining atom, in itself entire,  
Brightens the galaxy of sister stones,

Dust of a world that crumbled when God's dream  
    To throbbing pulses broke the life of things,  
And mingled with the void the scattered gleam  
    Of many orbs that move in many rings,

Perchance at last into the parent sun  
    To fall again and reunite their rays,  
When God awakes and gathers into one  
    The light of all his loves and all his days.

But I must con them while the rays of even  
Kindle aloft some fading jewel-gleam  
And the vast windows glow a peopled heaven,  
Rich with the gathering pageant of my dream.

Eden I see, where from the leafy cover  
The green-eyed snake begins to uncoil his length  
And whispers to the woman and her lover,  
As they lie musing, large, in peaceful strength.

I see their children, bent with toil and terror,  
Lurking in caves, or heaping madly on  
The stones of Babel, or the endless error  
Of Sodom, Nineveh, and Babylon.

Here the Egyptian, wedding life with death,  
Flies from the sun into his painted tomb,  
And winds the secret of his antique faith  
Tight in his shroud, and seals in sterile gloom.

There the bold prophets of the heart's desire  
Hail the new Zion God shall build for them,  
And rapt Isaiah strikes the heavenly lyre,  
And Jeremiah mourns Jerusalem.

Here David's daughter, full of grace and truth,  
Kneels in the temple, waiting for the Lord ;  
With the first *Ave* comes the wingèd youth,  
Bringing the lily ere he bring the sword.

There, to behold the Mother and the Child,  
The sturdy shepherds down the mountain plod,  
And angels sing, with voices sweet and wild  
And wide lips parted : "Glory be to God."

Here, mounted on an ass, the twain depart  
To hallowed Egypt, safe from Herod's wrong ;  
And Mary ponders all things in her heart,  
And pensive Joseph sadly walks along.

There with the Twelve, before his blood is shed,  
Christ blesses bread and breaks it with his hands,  
"This is my body." Thomas shakes his head,  
They marvel all, and no one understands,

Save John, whom Jesus loved above the rest.  
He marvels too, but, seeking naught beside,  
Leans, as his wont is, on his Master's breast.  
Ah ! the Lord's body also should abide.

There Golgotha is dark against the blue  
In the broad east, above the painted crowd,  
And many look upon the sign, but few  
Read the hard lesson of the cross aloud.

And from this altar, now an empty tomb,  
The Lord is risen. Lo ! he is not here.  
No shining angel sitteth in the gloom,  
No Magdalen in anguish draweth near.

---

All pure in heart, or all in aspect pure,  
The seemly Christians, kneeling, line the choir,  
And drop their eyelids, tender and demure,  
As the low lingering harmonies expire.

In that *Amen* are the last echoes blended  
Of all the ghostly world. The shades depart  
Into the sacred night. In peace is ended  
The long delirious fever of the heart.

Then I go forth into the open wold  
And breathe the vigour of the freshening wind,  
And with the piling drift of cloud I hold  
A worship sweeter to the homeless mind,

Where the squat willows with their osiers crowned  
Border the humble reaches of the Cam,  
And the deep meadows stretching far around  
Make me forget the exile that I am, —

Exile not only from the wind-swept moor  
Where Guadarrama lifts his purple crest,  
But from the spirit's realm, celestial, sure  
Goal of all hope and vision of the best.

They also will go forth, these gentle youths,  
Strong in the virtues of their manful isle,  
Till one the pathway of the forest smooths,  
And one the Ganges rules, and one the Nile ;

And to whatever wilderness they choose  
Their hearts will bear the sanctities of home,  
The perfect ardours of the Grecian Muse,  
The mighty labour of the arms of Rome ;

But, ah ! how little of these storied walls  
Beneath whose shadow all their nurture was !  
No, not one passing memory recalls  
The Blessed Mary and Saint Nicholas.



Unhappy King, look not upon these towers,  
Remember not thine only work that grew.  
The moving world that feeds thy gift devours,  
And the same hand that finished overthrew.

## ON AN UNFINISHED STATUE

BY MICHAEL ANGELO IN THE BARGELLO,  
CALLED AN APOLLO OR A DAVID

WHAT beauteous form beneath a marble veil  
    Awaited in this block the Master's hand?  
Could not the magic of his art avail  
    To unseal that beauty's tomb and bid it stand?

Alas! the torpid and unwilling mass  
    Misknew the sweetness of the mind's control,  
And the quick shifting of the winds, alas!  
    Denied a body to that flickering soul.

Fair homeless spirit, harbinger of bliss,  
    It wooed dead matter that they both might live,  
But dreamful earth still slumbered through the kiss  
    And missed the blessing heaven stooped to give,

108      ON AN UNFINISHED STATUE

As when Endymion, locked in dullard sleep,  
    Endured the gaze of Dian, till she turned  
Stung with immortal wrath and doomed to weep  
    Her maiden passion ignorantly spurned.

How should the vision stay to guide the hand,  
    How should the holy thought and ardour stay,  
When the false deeps of all the soul are sand  
    And the loose rivets of the spirit clay?

What chisel shaking in the pulse of lust  
    Shall find the perfect line, immortal, pure?  
What fancy blown by every random gust  
    Shall mount the breathless heavens and endure?

Vain was the trance through which a thrill of joy  
    Passed for the nonce, when a vague hand, unled,  
Half shaped the image of this lovely boy  
    And caught the angel's garment as he fled.

Leave, leave, distracted hand, the baffling stone,  
And on that clay, thy fickle heart, begin.  
Mould first some steadfast virtue of thine own  
Out of the sodden substance of thy sin.

They who wrought wonders by the Nile of old,  
Bequeathing their immortal part to us,  
Cast their own spirit first into the mould  
And were themselves the rock they fashioned thus.

Ever their docile and unwearied eye  
Traced the same ancient pageant to the grave,  
And awe made rich their spirit's husbandry  
With the perpetual reflue of its wave,

Till 'twixt the desert and the constant Nile  
Sphinx, pyramid, and awful temple grew,  
And the vast gods, self-knowing, learned to smile  
Beneath the sky's unalterable blue.

110      ON AN UNFINISHED STATUE

Long, long ere first the rapt Arcadian swain  
    Heard Pan's wild music pulsing through the grove,  
His people's shepherds held paternal reign  
    Beneath the large benignity of Jove.

Long mused the Delphic sibyl in her cave  
    Ere mid his laurels she beheld the god,  
And Beauty rose a virgin from the wave  
    In lands the foot of Heracles had trod.

Athena reared her consecrated wall,  
    Poseidon laid its rocky basement sure,  
When Theseus had the monstrous race in thrall  
    And made the worship of his people pure.

Long had the stripling stood in silence, veiled,  
    Hearing the heroes' legend o'er and o'er,  
Long in the keen palæstra striven, nor quailed  
    To tame the body to the task it bore,

ON AN UNFINISHED STATUE     III

Ere soul and body, shaped by patient art,  
    Walked linkèd with the gods, like friend with friend,  
And reason, mirrored in the sage's heart,  
    Beheld her purpose and confessed her end.

Mould, then, thyself and let the marble be.  
    Look not to frailty for immortal themes,  
Nor mock the travail of mortality  
    With barren husks and harvesting of dreams.

## MIDNIGHT

THE dank earth reeks with three days' rain,  
The phantom trees are dark and still,  
Above the darkness and the hill  
The tardy moon shines out again.  
O heavy lethargy of pain !  
O shadows of forgotten ill !

My parrot lips, when I was young,  
To prove and to disprove were bold.  
The mighty world has tied my tongue,  
And in dull custom growing old  
I leave the burning truth untold  
And the heart's anguish all unsung.

Youth dies in man's benumbed soul,  
Maid bows to woman's broken life,  
A thousand leagues of silence roll  
Between the husband and the wife.  
The spirit faints with inward strife  
And lonely gazing at the pole.

But how should reptiles pine for wings  
Or a parched desert know its dearth?  
Immortal is the soul that sings  
The sorrow of her mortal birth.  
O cruel beauty of the earth !  
O love's unutterable stings !



## IN GRANTCHESTER MEADOWS

### ON FIRST HEARING A SKYLARK SING

Too late, thou tender songster of the sky  
Trilling unseen, by things unseen inspired,  
    I list thy far-heard cry  
That poets oft to kindred song hath fired,  
As floating through the purple veils of air  
    Thy soul is poured on high,  
A little joy in an immense despair.

Too late thou biddest me escape the earth,  
    In ignorance of wrong  
To spin a little slender thread of song ;  
    On yet unwearied wing  
    To rise and soar and sing,  
    Not knowing death or birth  
Or any true unhappy human thing.

To dwell 'twixt field and cloud,  
 By river-willow and the murmurous sedge,  
 Be thy sweet privilege,  
 To thee and to thy happy lords allowed.  
 My native valley higher mountains hedge  
 'Neath starlit skies and proud,  
 And sadder music in my soul is loud.

Yet have I loved thy voice,  
 Frail echo of some ancient sacred joy.  
 Ah, who might not rejoice  
 Here to have wandered, a fair English boy,  
 And breathed with life thy rapture and thy rest  
 Where woven meadow-grasses fold thy nest?  
 But whose life is his choice?  
 And he who chooseth not hath chosen best.

## FUTILITY

FAIR Nature, has thy wisdom naught to say  
To cheer thy child in a disconsolate hour?  
Why do thy subtle hands betray their power  
And but half-fashioned leave thy finer clay?  
Upon what journeys doth thy fancy stray  
That weeds in thy broad garden choke the flower,  
And many a pilgrim harboured in thy bower  
A stranger came, a stranger went away?  
Ah, Mother, little can the soul avail  
Unchristened at some font of ancient love.  
What boots the vision if the meaning fail,  
When all the marvels of the skies above  
March to the passions they are mirrors of?  
If the heart pine, the very stars will pale.

## BEFORE A STATUE OF ACHILLES

### I

BEHOLD Pelides with his yellow hair,  
Proud child of Thetis, hero loved of Jove ;  
Above the frowning of his brows it wove  
A crown of gold, well combed, with Spartan care.  
Who might have seen him, sullen, great, and fair,  
As with the wrongful world he proudly strove,  
And by high deeds his wilder passion shrove,  
Mastering love, resentment, and despair.  
He knew his end, and Phoebus' arrow sure  
He braved for fame immortal and a friend,  
Despising life ; and we, who know our end,  
Know that in our decay he shall endure  
And all our children's hearts to grief inure,  
With whose first bitter battles his shall blend.

## II

Who brought thee forth, immortal vision, who  
In Phthia or in Tempe brought thee forth?  
Out of the sunlight and the sapful earth  
What god the simples of thy spirit drew?  
A goddess rose from the green waves, and threw  
Her arms about a king, to give thee birth;  
A centaur, patron of thy boyish mirth,  
Over the meadows in thy footsteps flew.  
Now Thessaly forgets thee, and the deep  
Thy keeled bark furrowed answers not thy prayer;  
But far away new generations keep  
Thy laurels fresh, where branching Isis hems  
The lawns of Oxford round about, or where  
Enchanted Eton sits by pleasant Thames.

And hunger turned the very stones to food.  
Insensate love, wilt thou then never tire,  
Breeding the fuel of thy proper fire?

## II

What gleaming cross rebukes this infidel?  
What lion groans, awakened in his lair?  
Angel or demon, what unearthly spell  
Returns, divinely false like all things fair,  
To mock this desolation? Fleeting vision,  
Frail as a smoke-wreath in the sunlit air,  
Indomitable hope or vain derision,  
Madness or revelation, sin or prayer,  
What art thou? Is man's sum of wisdom this,  
That he believe denying, and blaspheme  
Worshipping still, and drink eternal bliss  
Out of the maddening chalice of a dream?  
Strange sweetness that embitterest content,  
Art thou a poison or a sacrament?

## CATHEDRALS BY THE SEA

REPLY TO A SONNET BEGINNING "CATHE-  
DRALS ARE NOT BUILT ALONG THE SEA"

For æons had the self-responsive tide  
Risen to ebb, and tempests blown to clear,  
And the belated moon refilled her sphere  
To wane anew — for, æons since, she died —  
When to the deeps that called her earth replied  
(Lest year should cancel unavailing year)  
And took from her dead heart the stones to rear  
A cross-shaped temple to the Crucified.  
Then the wild winds through organ-pipes descended  
To utter what they meant eternally,  
And not in vain the moon devoutly mended  
Her wasted taper, lighting Calvary,  
While with a psalmody of angels blended  
The sullen diapason of the sea.

## MONT BRÉVENT

O DWELLER in the valley, lift thine eyes  
To where, above the drift of cloud, the stone  
Endures in silence, and to God alone  
Upturns its furrowed visage, and is wise.  
There yet is being, far from all that dies,  
And beauty where no mortal maketh moan,  
Where larger planets swim the liquid zone,  
And wider spaces stretch to calmer skies.  
Only a little way above the plain  
Is snow eternal. Round the mountain's knees  
Hovers the fury of the wind and rain.  
Look up, and teach thy noble heart to cease  
From endless labour. There is perfect peace  
Only a little way above thy pain.



## THE RUSTIC AT THE PLAY

OUR youth is like a rustic at the play  
That cries aloud in simple-hearted fear,  
Curses the villain, shudders at the fray,  
And weeps before the maiden's wreathèd bier.  
Yet once familiar with the changeful show,  
He starts no longer at a brandished knife,  
But, his heart chastened at the sight of woe,  
Ponders the mirrored sorrows of his life.  
So tutored too, I watch the moving art  
Of all this magic and impassioned pain  
That tells the story of the human heart  
In a false instance, such as poets feign ;  
I smile, and keep within the parchment furled  
That prompts the passions of this strutting world.

## RESURRECTION

### THE SOUL OF A BURIED BODY

METHOUGHT that I was dead,  
Felt my large heart, a tomb within the tomb,  
Cold, hope-untenanted,  
Not thankless for this gloom.  
For all I loved on earth had fled before me.  
I was the last to die.  
I heard what my soul hated tramping o'er me,  
And knew that trouble stalked beneath the sky.  
But now is loosed the mailed hand of Death  
Clapped on my mouth. I seem to draw a breath  
And something like a sigh.

I feel the blood again  
Coursing within my body's quickened house,  
    Feel hands and throat and brain,  
    And dim thoughts growing plain,  
Or dreams of thoughts. So spring might thaw the  
    boughs  
And from its winter's lethargy arouse  
An oak's numb spirit. — But hark ! I seem to hear  
    A sound, like distant thunder.  
Above the quaking earth it breaks, or under,  
    And cracks the riven sphere.  
This vault is widened, I may lift my head,  
Behold a ray ! The sun ! — I was not dead.

## THE ANGEL OF ETERNITY

Yes, dead. Be not affrighted.  
Ages have passed. This world is not the same.  
    Thy lamp of life, relighted,  
    Burns with a purer flame.

## THE SOUL

What lovely form art thou?  
What spirit, voice, or face  
Known and unknown? I cannot name thee now  
Nor the long-vanished place  
Where first I pledged thee some forgotten vow.  
Dear mother or sweet son  
Or young love dead or lost familiar friend,  
Which of these all art thou, or all, or none,  
Bright stranger, that dost bend  
Thy glorious golden head,  
A kindlier sun, above the wakened dead?

## THE ANGEL

We are not strangers. 'T is the world was strange,  
That rude antique parade of earth and sky,  
That foolish pageant of mortality  
And weary round of change.  
Till this glad moment thou hast lived in dreams,

Nursed in a fable, catechised to croon  
The empty science of a sun and moon  
    That with their dubious beams  
Light the huge dusky stage of all that seems.  
Believe it not, my own. Awake, depart  
    Out of the shades of hell,  
    Trusting the sacred spell  
That falls upon thy strong perplexèd heart,  
    The joy ineffable,  
The nameless premonition and dire pang  
    Of love. Be free at last,  
Free as the hopes that from thy sorrow sprang.  
Forget the horror of the tyrant past,  
    Forget the gods, forget  
The baleful shadow on the present cast  
    By all that is not yet.  
Arise and follow me. Say not I seem  
    A shadow among shades,  
A dryad's laugh amid the windy glades,  
A swimmer's body guessed beneath the stream.

This is the dawn of day,  
Thy dream-oppressèd vision breaking through  
    Its icy hood of clay  
And plunging deep into the balmy blue.  
    Bid thy vain cares adieu  
And say farewell to earth, thy foster-mother.  
    She hath befooled thee long,  
    And fondly thought to smother  
The sweet and cruel laughter of my song  
Which the stars sing together, and the throng  
Of seraphs ever shout to one another.  
    Come, heaven-chosen brother,  
    Dear kinsman, come along.

## THE SOUL

To what fields beside what rivers  
Dost thou beckon me, fair love?  
With no sprinkled stars above  
Is high heaven seen? Or quivers,

With no changes of the moon,  
Her bright path athwart the pool?  
Is thy strange world beautiful?  
Tell me true, before I shake  
From my sense this heavy swoon.  
Tell me true, lest I awake  
Into deeper dreams, poor fool,  
And rejoice for nothing's sake.

## THE ANGEL

For mortals life and truth  
Are things apart, nor when the first is done  
Know they the other ; for their lusty youth  
Is madness, and their age oblivion.  
But henceforth thou art one  
With the supernal mind,  
Not born in labour nor in death resigned,  
The life of all that live,  
The light by whose eclipse the world is blind,

The truth of all that know,  
The joy for which we grieve,  
And the untasted sweet that makes our woe.  
Now thou hast drained the wine  
Shatter the glass.  
The music was divine,  
Let the voice pass.  
Linger not in the host  
Of the long lost  
Bidding the dying bring  
Meal-cakes and fruit, and sing  
To cheer thy ghost.  
But be the living joy  
That tunes all song,  
The loves of girl and boy,  
The hopes that throng  
The unconquerable heart, defying wrong.  
Seek for thine immortality of bliss  
Not other brighter skies  
Or later worlds than this,



But all that in this struggle is the prize,  
The love that wings the kiss,  
The truth the visions miss.

## THE SOUL

My heaven lives, bright angel, in thine eyes.  
As when, beside the Lake of Galilee,  
John, o'er his meshes bent,  
Looked up, and saw another firmament  
When God said, Follow me ;  
So is my world transfigured, seeing thee,  
And, looking in thine eyes, I am content,  
And with thy sweet voice for all argument  
I leave my tangled nets beside the sea.  
Done is my feignèd task,  
Fallen the mask  
That made me other, O my soul, than thee.  
I have fulfilled my pain  
And borne my cross,  
And my great gain

Is to have known my loss.  
Keep, blessed vision, keep  
The sacred beauty that entranced my soul.  
I have read ; seal the scroll.  
I have lived ; let me sleep.

## THE ANGEL

Behold, I close thine eyes  
With the first touch of my benignant hands.  
With consecrated brands  
I light thy pyre and loose thy spirit's bands.  
The eternal gods receive thy sacrifice,  
The changeless bless thy embers.  
May there arise from thence no wailing ghost  
That shivers and remembers  
The haunts he loved, where he hath suffered most.  
The life that lived by change  
Is dead, nor changeth more.  
No eager, dull, oblivious senses pore  
On portents dark and strange.

Thy first life was not life,  
Nor was thy first death death.  
Thy children took thy heritage of strife,  
And thy transmutable breath  
Passed to another heart that travaileth.  
Now thou hast truly died ;  
Escaped, renounced, defied  
The insensate fervour and the fret of being ;  
And thy own master, freed  
From shame of murderous need,  
Pure, just, all-seeing,  
Now thou shalt live indeed.

## THE SOUL

I pay the price of birth,  
My earth returns to earth.  
Hurry my ashes, thou avenging wind,  
Into the vortex of the whirling spheres !  
I die, for I have sinned,  
Yea, I have loved, and drained my heart of tears.

And thou within whose womb,  
Mother of nations, labouring Universe,  
My life grew, be its tomb.  
Thou brought'st me forth, take now my vital seed.  
Receive thy wage, thou iron-hearted nurse,  
Thy blessing I requite thee and thy curse.  
Now shall my ashes breed  
Within thy flesh for every thought a thought,  
For every deed a deed,  
For every pang I bore  
An everlasting need,  
For every wrong a wrong, and endless war.  
All earthly hopes resigned  
And all thy battle's spoils  
I lay upon thine altar and restore ;  
But the inviolate mind  
Is loosened from thy toils  
By thy own fatal fires. I mount, I soar,  
Glad Phoenix, from the flame  
Into the placid heaven whence I came,

Floating upon the smoke's slow lurid wings  
    Into my native sky  
To bear report of all this vanity  
    And sad offence of things,  
    Where with knowledge I may lie,  
Veiled in the shadow of eternal wings.

## THE ANGEL

If in the secret sessions of our love  
    Above the heavenly spheres,  
Some stain upon the page of wisdom prove  
    Her earthly price of tears,  
Cling closer, my beloved, that the beat  
    Of my unruffled heart  
May tune thy own, its tenderer counterpart,  
To noble courage, and from this high seat  
    Of our divine repose  
Large consolation flow to mortal woes.  
    For 'neath the sun's fierce heat,  
In midst of madness and inscrutable throes,

His heart is strong who knows  
That o'er the mountains come the silent feet  
Of Patience, leading Peace,  
And his complainings cease  
To see the starlight shining on the snows.



## TRANSLATIONS





## FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

### I

*"Non so se s'è la desiata luce"*

I KNOW not if from uncreated spheres  
Some longed-for ray it be that warms my breast,  
Or lesser light, in memory expressed,  
Of some once lovely face, that reappears,  
Or passing rumour ringing in my ears,  
Or dreamy vision, once my bosom's guest,  
That left behind I know not what unrest,  
Haply the reason of these wayward tears.  
But what I feel and seek, what leads me on,  
Comes not of me ; nor can I tell aright  
Where shines the hidden star that sheds this light.  
Since I beheld thee, sweet and bitter fight  
Within me. Resolution have I none.  
Can this be, Master, what thine eyes have done ?

## II

*"Il mio refugio"*

THE haven and last refuge of my pain  
(A strong and safe defence)  
Are tears and supplications, but in vain.  
Love sets upon me banded with Disdain,  
One armed with pity and one armed with death,  
And as death smites me, pity lends me breath.  
Else had my soul long since departed thence.  
She pineth to remove  
Whither her hopes of endless peace abide  
And beauty dwelleth without beauty's pride,  
There her last bliss to prove.  
But still the living fountain of my tears  
Wells in the heart when all thy truth appears,  
Lest death should vanquish love.

## III

*"Gli occhi miei vaghi delle cose belle"*

RAVISHED by all that to the eyes is fair,  
Yet hungry for the joys that truly bless,  
My soul can find no stair  
To mount to heaven, save earth's loveliness.  
For from the stars above  
Descends a glorious light  
That lifts our longing to their highest height  
And bears the name of love.  
Nor is there aught can move  
A gentle heart, or purge or make it wise,  
But beauty and the starlight of her eyes.

## FROM ALFRED DE MUSSET

### SOUVENIR

I WEEP, but with no bitterness I weep,  
To look again upon thee, hallowed spot,  
O dearest grave, and most of men forgot,  
Where buried love doth sleep.

What witchcraft think you that this desert hath,  
Dear friends, who take my hand and bid me stay,  
Now that the gentle wont of many a day  
Would lead me down this path?

Here are the wooded slopes, the flowering heath,  
The silver footprints on the silent sand,  
The loitering lanes, alive with lovers' breath,  
Where first I kissed her hand.

I know these fir-trees, and this mossy stone,  
And this deep gorge, and all its winding ways ;  
These friendly giants, whose primeval moan  
Hath rocked my happy days.

My footsteps' echo in this tangled tree  
Gives back youth's music, like a singing bird ;  
Dear haunts, fair wilderness her presence stirred,  
Did you not watch for me ?

I will not dry these tear-drops : let them flow,  
And soothe a bitterness that yet might last,  
And o'er my waking-weary eyelids throw  
The shadow of the past.

My useless plainings shall not make to cease  
The happy echoes of the vows we vowed :  
Proud is this forest in its noble peace,  
And my heart too is proud.

Give o'er to hopeless grief the bitter hours  
You kneel to pray upon a brother's tomb :  
Here blows the breath of love, and graveyard flowers  
Not in this garden bloom.

See ! The moon rides athwart a bank of cloud.  
Thy veils, fair Queen of Night, still cling to thee,  
But soon thou loosenest thy virgin shroud  
And smilest to be free.

As the rich earth, still dank with April rain,  
Beneath thy rays exhales day's captive balm,  
So from my purgèd soul, as pure, as calm,  
The old love breathes again.

Where are they gone, those ghosts of sorrow pale,  
Where fled the passion that my heart defiled ?  
Once in the bosom of this friendly vale  
I am again a child.

O might of time, O changes of the year,  
Ye undo sorrow and the tears we shed,  
But, touched with pity, on our blossoms sere  
Your light feet never tread.

Heavenly solace, be for ever blest !  
I had not thought a sword could pierce so far  
Into the heart, and leave upon the breast  
So sweet and dear a scar.

Far from me the sharp word, the thankless mind,  
Of vulgar sorrow customary weed,  
Shroud that about the corse of love they wind  
Who never loved indeed.

Why, Dante, dost thou say the saddest curse  
Is joy remembered in unhappy days?  
What grief compelled thee to this bitter verse  
In sorrow's harsh dispraise?

---



O'er all the worlds is light bereft of gladness  
When sad eclipses cast their blight on us?  
Did thy great soul, in its immortal sadness,  
Speak to thee, Dante, thus?

No, by this sacred light upon me cast !  
Not in thy heart this blasphemy had birth.  
It is the truest happiness on earth  
To have a happy past.

What ! When the soul forlorn finds yet a spark  
Mid the hot ashes of her stifled sighs,  
And doth that flame, her only treasure, mark  
With captivated eyes,

Bathing her wounds in the delicious past  
That mirrors brokenly her loves again,  
Thy cruel word her feeble joy would blast  
And turn to bitter pain?

And couldst thou wrong thine own Francesca so,  
Wrong thy bright angel with a word like this,  
Her whose lips, parting to rehearse her woe,  
    Broke an eternal kiss?

What, righteous Heaven, is our human thought,  
And to the love of truth who yet will cling,  
If every pain or joy e'er shunned or sought  
    Turns to a doubtful thing?

How can you live, strange souls that nothing awes?  
In midst of haste and passion, song and mirth,  
Nor all the stars of heaven give you pause,  
    Nor all the sins of earth ;

But when upon your fated way you meet  
Some dumb memorial of a passion dead,  
That little pebble stops you, and you dread  
    To bruise your tender feet.

---

150      FROM ALFRED DE MUSSET

You cry aloud that life is but a dream,  
And, to the truth awaking, wring your hands,  
And grieve your bubble but a moment stands  
    Upon time's foaming stream.

Poor fools ! That moment when your soul could shake  
The numbing fetters off that it enthrall,  
That fleeting moment was your all in all —  
    Oh, mourn not for its sake !

But rather mourn your weight of earthly dross,  
Your joyless toil, your stains of blood and mire,  
Your sunless days, your nights without desire ;  
    In these was utter loss.

What profit have you of your late lament,  
And what from heaven do your murmurs crave,  
The plaints you sow upon the barren grave  
    Of every pleasure spent ?

Life is a dream, and all things pass, I know :  
If some fair splendour we be charmed withal,  
We pluck the flower, and at the breath we blow  
    Its withered petals fall.

Ay, the first kiss and the first virgin vow  
That ever mortals upon earth did swear,  
That whirlwind caught which strips the frozen bough  
    And stones to sand doth wear.

A witness to the lovers' troth was night,  
With changeful skies, o'ercast with mystery,  
And stars unnumbered, that an inward light  
    Devours unceasingly.

They saw death hush the song bird in the glade,  
Blast the pale flower, and freeze the torpid worm,  
And choke the fountain where the image played  
    Of their forgotten form.

---

Yet they joined hands above the mouldering clod,  
Blind with love's light that flashed across the sky,  
Nor felt the cold eye of the changeless God  
Who watches all things die.

Fools ! says the sage : thrice blest ! the poet says.  
What wretched joy is to the faint heart dear  
Whom noise of torrents fills with weak amaze  
And the wind fills with fear ?

I have seen beneath the sun more beauties fail  
Than white sea foam or leaves of forest sere ;  
More than the swallows and the roses frail  
Desert the widowed year.

Mine eyes have gazed on sights of deeper woe  
Than Juliet dead within the gorgèd tomb,  
And deadlier than the cup that Romeo  
Drank to his love and doom.

I have seen my love, when all I loved had perished,  
 Who to a whited sepulchre is turned ;  
 Seen the thin dust of all I ever cherished  
     In her cold heart inurned,—

Dust of that faith which, in our bosoms furled,  
 The gentle night had warded well from doubt.  
 More than a single life, alas ! a world  
     Was that day blotted out.

Still young I found her, and, men said, more fair ;  
 In heaven's light her eyes could still rejoice,  
 And her lips opened, and a smile was there,  
     And sound as of a voice.

But not that gentle voice, that tender grace,  
 Those eyes I worshipped when they looked their  
     prayer :  
 My heart, still full of her, searched, searched her face  
     And could not find her there.

And still I could have gone to her, and cast  
My arms about that chill and lifeless stone,  
And cried, Where hast thou left it, faithless one,  
Where hast thou left the past?

But no : it rather seemed as if by chance  
Some unknown woman had that voice and eye ;  
I looked up into heaven ; with cold glance  
I passed that statue by.

Not without pangs of shame and bitterness  
I watched her smiling shadow glide away ;  
But what of that ? Immortal nature, say,  
Have I loved therefore less?

On me the gods may now their lightnings fling,  
They cannot undo truth, nor kill the past.  
Like a wrecked sailor to a broken mast  
To my dead love I cling.

I make no question of what flowers may bloom,  
What virtue from the seasons man may borrow,  
What heavenly lamp may flood with light to-morrow  
The vault of this great tomb.

I only say: Here at this hour, one day,  
I loved, and I was loved, and she was fair.  
This treasure which no death can filch away  
My soul to God shall bear.



## FROM THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

### ART

ALL things are doubly fair  
If patience fashion them  
And care —  
Verse, enamel, marble, gem.

No idle chains endure :  
Yet, Muse, to walk aright,  
Lace tight  
Thy buskin proud and sure.

Fie on a facile measure,  
A shoe where every lout  
At pleasure  
Slips his foot in and out !

Sculptor, lay by the clay  
On which thy nerveless finger  
    May linger,  
Thy thoughts flown far away.

Keep to Carrara rare,  
Struggle with Paros cold,  
    That hold  
The subtle line and fair.

Lest haply nature lose  
That proud, that perfect line,  
    Make thine  
The bronze of Syracuse.

And with a tender dread  
Upon an agate's face  
    Retrace  
Apollo's golden head.

Despise a watery hue  
And tints that soon expire.

With fire  
Burn thine enamel true.

Twine, twine in artful wise  
The blue-green mermaid's arms,  
Mid charms  
Of thousand heraldries.

Show in their triple lobe  
Virgin and Child, that hold  
Their globe,  
Cross-crowned and aureoled.

— All things return to dust  
Save beauties fashioned well.  
The bust  
Outlasts the citadel.

Oft doth the ploughman's heel,  
Breaking an ancient clod,  
Reveal  
A Cæsar or a god.

The gods, too, die, alas !  
But deathless and more strong  
Than brass  
Remains the sovereign song.

Chisel and carve and file,  
Till thy vague dream imprint  
Its smile  
On the unyielding flint.



CONVIVIAL AND OCCASIONAL  
VERSES



## *PROSIT NEUJAHR*

BE the new year sweet and short  
As the days of girl and boy are,  
Full of friendship, full of sport —  
*Prosit Neujahr !*

Be it beautiful and great  
As the days of grief and joy are,  
Full of wonder and of fate —  
*Prosit Neujahr !*



## FAIR HARVARD

FAIR Harvard, the winter of Puritan snows  
That enshrouded thy tremulous birth  
Melts slowly to spring, now the south wind blows  
O'er the face of this generous earth.

Thy elms are outspreading their flexible arms  
Over meadows more fruitful and broad,  
And soft ivy is veiling with negligent charms  
The gaunt walls of the castle of God.

With freedom for heritage, reason for star,  
And friendship for sojourner here,  
Shall music long tremblingly sound from afar  
Or genius be smothered in fear?

Where the ages may meet and the spirit may climb  
To a truth that is builded on doubt,  
The eternal may dwell mid the currents of time  
And peace above barbarous rout,

And the just voice unlearn to be strident and sharp,  
And, attuned to life's happier choir,  
Join the stress of all David might shout to his harp  
With all Lysis might lisp to his lyre,

And Olympia again call the strong and the fleet  
To glory and art and control,  
And a deathless Academy build a retreat  
To ponder the things of the soul.

If to glory, young Mother, thy destiny tend,  
If thy labours have honour in store,  
Our loves shall not die, though their chronicle end  
Nor mortals remember us more.

For once from their dreaming the man and the boy,  
Fair Harvard, awoke at thy name,  
And our happiest years were a part of thy joy,  
And our light was a spark of thy flame.

## COLLEGE DRINKING SONG

As we say good-bye at the parting ways,  
Let us sing together a song of praise,  
Let us drink a toast to our college days,  
To the walks through a world made for you and me,  
To the boisterous farce and the echoing glee,  
To the wonderful A and the dreadful E,  
    Drink, boys, drink !

To the games we won and the games we lost,  
For we could n't tell which before we tossed,  
And who cares now who paid the cost?  
To the woman's love that came and went,  
To the good wine drunk and the money spent,  
To the night-long foolish argument,  
    Drink, boys, drink !

To the times when men were men indeed,  
To our fathers' youth and our mothers' creed,  
And to every faith that may succeed,  
To the after age and the later tongue  
That will ring the changes we have rung  
And sing the songs we have left unsung,  
Drink, boys, drink !

When the eye is dull and the hand is cold,  
Then should the pocket be full of gold,  
For no one will love us when we're old.  
So to vulgar gold and what it gets  
And an honest end to all our debts,  
For an old wine softens old regrets,  
Drink, boys, drink !

When we are asleep beneath grey stone,  
Our children's lives shall repeat our own,  
For the light remains though the days be flown.

To the opening buds of this ended May,  
And to all sweet things that will not stay,  
And to every dog that has had his day,  
    Drink, boys, drink !

## SIX WISE FOOLS

TWELVE had struck. Our talk subsided.

We were comrades in the schools  
By the world awhile divided —

Six sententious merry fools.  
And I said, “ We ’ve talked of college,  
Resurrecting callow youth.

But you since have lived ; what knowledge  
Have you gathered of the Truth?

And you first, most learned scholar,  
Whom I ’m proud to sit beside,  
Speak : does wisdom sans a dollar

Leave you wholly satisfied?  
You have walked, and never wavered,  
In the paths the sages took

And three publishers have favoured  
    With a yet unpublished book.  
The soul's garden you have weeded  
    Which we mortals trample through,  
You love much we leave unheeded.  
    Speak, and let us learn of you."  
And the student thus proceeded,  
    As a gentle sigh he drew :

## THE SCHOLAR

I'm thankful that as matters go  
    I neither toil nor spin,  
But read the good old wits, heigh ho !  
    And live with elder kin ;  
  
That I need neither reap nor sow  
    Nor gather into barns,  
But dwell among my books, heigh ho !  
    Repeating ancient yarns.



Dead things are not my science, no,  
Nor fossil parts of speech,  
But the great human heart, heigh ho !  
That pedants never reach.

The record of man's joy and woe  
Upon his sculptured face  
I read by my heart's light, heigh ho !  
And vanquish time and space.

I find no vice so foul and low  
But nature lurks therein,  
Nor any thought so high, heigh ho !  
But pays the price of sin.

I feel the pity and the glow  
Of truth's sublime communion,  
And learn to smile at fate, heigh ho !  
In friendship's happy union.

Let this but last till death's wind blow  
And till my bones are rotten,

Then let the world sail on, heigh ho !  
And be my name forgotten.

“ Now you, votary of pleasure,”  
Turning to the next, I said,  
“ Count the profit of your leisure  
And the cost of unearned bread.  
Tell us what civilisation  
Merits your impartial praise,  
In what climate, in what nation  
You have spent most joyous days.”  
Quoth he, as if in admiration  
That such questions I should raise :

#### THE SPORT

All things are nice when they are new,  
When they are old, all things are horrid.  
After the storm I like the blue,  
After the arctic zone the torrid.

My loves are many, brief, and true,  
By mutual jealousy unworried.

I like to leave my house and home  
And cross the mountains and the sea ;  
With one small bag on earth to roam,  
That is the height of bliss for me.  
To roam on earth without my bag,  
That is the depth of misery.

That freedom cheats us with a word  
Which sets up knaves and murders kings.  
What soul is free that never stirred ?  
Go cut your mother's apron-strings,  
And putting money in your purse,  
Fly off on the express-train's wings.

I'll stay at home when I am lame,  
And build a church when stuffed with gold,  
I will be grave when known to fame,  
I will be chaste when I am old.

Then all the angels will rejoice  
That I, lost lamb, regain the fold.

“Without some evil, nothing good,”  
Your subtle theologians say.  
I glorify their rectitude  
By straying in my artless way.  
My needful sins make possible  
The higher morals of the day.

This is our only chance to taste  
The sweet and bitter fruits of earth.  
To pluck them all, we’ve need of haste ;  
We cannot ask what each is worth.  
Up, up, wise virgin ; do not waste  
The little time ’twixt death and birth.

Come feel the joy of changing skies,  
Of rushing streams and windy weather.  
Though we be bound by fortune’s ties,  
We’ll to the utmost stretch the tether,

And be they gay or be they sad,  
We' ll go and see the sights together.

## THE CRITIC

"Shall men agree?" the next man said,  
"Each mind is shut within some head  
(*Pace* the minds of all the dead)  
With two eyes, seldom of a size,  
And spectacles before the eyes.  
Then, if men differ, what surprise?

"See the wight who wrapped in sadness  
Grieves how soon this life is done,  
And, disgusted with the madness  
Of the way the world is run,  
Scorns the hollowness of gladness  
And the idiocy of fun :  
Why, the spots upon the sun  
Can be seen, when the ray passes  
Blue eye-glasses.

“And what makes the moonlight shimmer  
    With the dancing of the sea  
And the little stars cold glimmer  
    Twinkle with an inward glee  
While this working-world grows dimmer  
    If my Mary looks with me?  
    Not the moon or stars or sea,  
But the fickle cause, alas, is  
    Love’s eye-glasses.

“Oh, how sad a world to cough in  
    Is a world once warm and fair,  
And how many fallings off in  
    Old men’s world of falling hair,  
Till they think within the coffin  
    That there’s no world anywhere.  
    For I fancy dead men wear  
(Take your look now, lads and lasses !)  
    No eye-glasses.”

He stopped, and with a civil look  
Said to his neighbour, "You come next,"  
Who had been looking at a book  
And seemed a trifle bored and vexed.  
He laid the book down, stretched his legs  
And yawned, and, emptying his glass,  
Made a grimace as if the dregs  
Were bitter, and replied, "I pass."  
When pressed, he shook his languid head  
Until at last he hemmed and said :

## THE PESSIMIST

I set my heart on being good,  
Believed the Bible to the letter,  
Yes, joined a Christian brotherhood  
When I was young and knew no better ;  
And, if I sometimes sinned, I wept  
That God's commandments were not kept.

As time went on, I understood  
That it was wrong to be so good.

My heart I set on being wise  
And passing for a clever fellow :  
Reading o' nights I spoilt my eyes,  
And lack of fresh air turned me yellow.  
Each book I read said t' other lied,  
I saw the less the more I pried,  
And so I found, to my surprise,  
I was a fool to be so wise.

I set my heart on making friends  
Pleasant and clever, kind and witty ;  
They now are at the earth's four ends,  
Two only have n't left the city.  
The one is given up to trade,  
The other in the churchyard laid.  
And when youth's gone and leisure ends,  
It is too late for making friends.



I set my heart upon a girl  
Who chose at my approach to smile.  
Did she but pat some frizzled curl,  
I knew the angel free from guile.  
But now a rich man owns my belle,  
I find the others smile as well,  
And my moustache no more I twirl,  
Nor set my heart upon a girl.

I set my heart on seeing things,  
And wished through every land to travel,  
See Troja's ruins, Nilus' springs,  
And culture's history unravel.  
When many a sea had made me sick,  
Men still were bipeds, houses brick.  
Since nearer Truth no journey brings  
I make an end of seeing things.

I set my heart on politics ;  
I glowed for honesty and freedom.

My earnest thoughts I tried to fix  
Upon the poor, and how to feed 'em.  
But the reformer cheats himself,  
He serves his prejudice or pelf,  
And no man's will but inward fate  
Governs the fortunes of the state.

I set my heart on nothing now,  
But bless the gifts of every hour,  
Holding my hand beneath life's bough  
To catch the fruit or falling flower.  
With the world breathing at my feet,  
I find the sunset stillness sweet,  
And with the night wind on my brow  
I set my heart on nothing now.

He scarce had done, when the last man,  
Who'd listened hard to every word,  
Thus, rising in his place, began  
As if impatient to be heard :

## THE LOVER

Oh, you men who are not married  
Have n't known the joy of living,  
On the margin you have tarried,  
Never putting out to sea ;  
All your musing, all your grieving,  
Is a childish thing to me.

I have done with idle moping  
And have seen my manly duty.  
There is no more doubt and groping,  
Since I took a woman's hand,  
And the loadstar of her beauty  
Led me to the promised land.

For her sake my work is pleasure  
And I thrive in my devotion,  
Though I seek repute and treasure  
But to have the gifts to give,  
For my love, like River Ocean,  
Rounds the world in which I live.

When I feel, in softest slumber,  
Her fair head upon my pillow,  
I think how the misty Humber  
And the Ganges' holy stream  
Send their treasures o'er the billow  
To embalm my lady's dream.

Rightly did my father rear me  
Close beside the village steeple,  
Rightly shall my sons revere me  
When they come to take my place,  
For I serve my land and people  
And maintain my sturdy race.

Fill your glasses up with liquor,  
Drink it down while yet it bubbles.  
When the heart beats quick and quicker  
Love is knocking. Drink with me :  
Here is death to all your troubles,  
And long life, fair love, to thee !

"Yes, fill your glasses up, I pray you,"  
Said I, "and make it bumpers now,  
For whatsoever passion sway you  
Some noble love we all avow.

"We bear a mark, an inward token,  
That parts us from the common herd.  
To each of us some muse has spoken  
A holy, unforgotten word.

"Our stars, conjoined in youth's first season,  
Whether to musing moved or strife,  
Obedient to one touch of reason  
Together make the round of life.

"Drink to the loves we knitted here,  
A bond by distance not undone.  
High thoughts outlive the wasted year;  
I drink to that which makes us one."

## ATHLETIC ODE

I HEAR a rumour and a shout,  
A louder heart-throb pulses in the air.  
Fling, Muse, thy lattice open, and beware  
    To keep the morning out.  
Beckon into the chamber of thy care  
    The bird of healing wing  
    That trilleth there  
Blithe happy passion of the strong and fair.  
Their wild heart singeth. Do thou also sing.  
    How vain, how vain  
The feeble croaking of a reasoning tongue  
    That heals no pain  
And prompts no bright deed worthy to be sung !  
    Too soon cold earth  
Refuses flowers. Oh, greet their lovely birth !

Too soon dull death  
Quiets the heaving of our doubtful breath.  
Deem not its worth  
Too high for honouring mirth ;  
Sing while the lyre is strung,  
And let the heart beat, while the heart is  
young.

When the dank earth begins to thaw and yield  
The early clover, didst thou never pass  
Some balmy noon from field to sunny field  
And press thy feet against the tufted grass?  
So hadst thou seen  
A spring palæstra on the tender green.  
Here a tall stripling, with a woman's face,  
Draws the spiked sandal on his upturned heel,  
Sure-footed for the race ;  
Another hurls the quoit of heavy steel  
And glories to be strong ;  
While yet another, lightest of the throng,

Crouching on tiptoe for the sudden bound,  
Flies o'er the level race-course, like the hound,

And soon is lost afar ;

Another jumps the bar,

For some god taught him easily to spring,  
The legs drawn under, as a bird takes wing,  
Till, tempting fortune farther than is meet,  
At last he fails, and fails, and vainly tries,  
And blushing, and ashamed to lift his eyes,  
Shakes the light earth from his feet.

Him friendly plaudits greet

And pleasing to the unaccustomed ear.

Come then afield, come with the sporting year

And watch the youth at play,

For gentle is the strengthening sun, and sweet  
The soul of boyhood and the breath of May.

And with the milder ray

Of the declining sun, when sky and shore,  
In purple drest and misty silver-grey,



Hang curtains round the day,  
Come list the beating of the plashing oar,  
For grief in rhythmic labour glides away.  
The glancing blades make circles where they dip, —  
Now flash and drip  
Cool wind-blown drops into the glassy river,  
Now sink and cleave,  
While the lithe rowers heave  
And feel the boat beneath them leap and quiver.  
The supple oars in time,  
Shattering the mirror of the rippled water,  
Fly, fly as poets climb,  
Borne by the pliant promise of their rhyme,  
Or as bewitched by Nereus' loveliest daughter  
The painted dolphins, following along,  
Leap to the measure of her liquid song.

But the blasts of late October,  
Tempering summer's paling grief  
With a russet glow and sober,

Bring of these sports the latest and the chief.  
Then bursts the flame from many a smouldering ember,

    And many an ardent boy  
Woos harsher pleasures sweeter to remember,  
Hugged with a sterner and a tenser joy.

    Look where the rivals come :  
Each little phalanx on its chosen ground  
Strains for the sudden shock, and all around  
    The multitude is dumb.

    Come, watch the stubborn fight  
    And doubtful, in the sight  
Of wide-eyed beauty and unstinted love  
    Ay, the wise gods above,  
Attentive to this hot and generous fray,  
Smile on its fortunes and its end prepare,  
For play is also life, and far from care  
    Their own glad life is play.

Ye nymphs and fauns, to Bacchus dear,  
That woke Cithæron with your midnight rout,

Arise, arise and shout !  
Your day returns, your haunt is here.  
Shake off dull sleep and long despair ;  
There is intoxication in this air,  
And frenzy in this yelping cheer.  
How oft of old the enraptured Muses sung  
Olympian victors' praise.  
Lo ! even in these days  
The world is young.  
Life like a torrent flung  
For ever down  
For ever wears a rainbow for a crown.  
O idle sigh for loveliness outworn,  
When the red flush of each unfailing morn  
Floods every field and grove,  
And no moon wanes but some one is in love.  
O wasted tear,  
A new soul wakes with each awakened year.  
Beneath these rags, these blood-clots on the face,  
The valiant soul is still the same, the same

The strength, the art, the inevitable grace,  
    The thirst unquenched for fame  
Quenching base passion, the high will severe,  
The long obedience, and the knightly flame  
Of loyalty to honour and a name.

Give o'er, ye chords, your music ere ye tire,  
    Be sweetly mute, O lyre.  
Words soon are cold, and life is warm for ever.  
One half of honour is the strong endeavour,  
Success the other, but when both conspire  
Youth has her perfect crown, and age her old desire.

## THE BOTTLES AND THE WINE

LINES READ AT THE REUNION OF A  
COLLEGE CLUB

Would you have an illustration  
Of the thing we fellows are?  
Liken every generation  
To the bottles in the bar :  
Vessels full of precious liquor  
Standing in their brave array, —  
Never bosom friends were thicker  
Or of franker heart than they,  
There congenially hobnobbing,  
Always ready for a bout,  
As half laughing and half sobbing  
The fine spirits bubble out.

THE BOTTLES AND THE WINE 193

We buy, break, drink, waste, decant them —

Bottles come and bottles go —

Yet there always, when you want them,

Stand the bottles in a row :

Port and sherry, rum and brandy,

Irish, Bourbon, Scotch, and rye,

Always smiling, always handy

When the heart 's a trifle dry.

Though the bottles change their label

And tag on another name,

They're as welcome at the table,

For the liquor 's still the same.

Days gone by saw jugs in plenty,

Now less frequently on view.

Every year some ten or twenty

Pass to fields and pastures new.

There, replenished, they grow fatter

And their bellies bulge amain,

But though full as yet of matter,

You may mark a certain drain,  
For the busy world's contention  
Brings the liquid down a bit,  
And a small god I won't mention  
Sometimes takes a pull at it.  
Yet apart from some mischances,  
Though not standing where they stood,  
For big dinners and small dances  
Our old bottles still are good.  
But when once the dregs are emptied,  
We throw bottles in a heap,  
Not one favourite exempted,  
Were its spirit fine or cheap.  
They're doled out in the back alley  
By the scrawny hands of hags  
When gaunt Death comes shilly-shally  
Crying, "Bottles and old rags!"  
What of that? While face and feature,  
Manners, minds, and pleasures pass,  
Nature breeds a younger creature,

THE BOTTLES AND THE WINE 195

Mate to what the other was,  
And the sports we had forsaken,  
And the fancies blown away  
In the brighter souls they waken  
Live for ever and a day.  
The proud glories that entice us  
No more fail because we pass  
Than the founts of Dionysus  
For the quaffing of a glass.

But what happens to the liquor?  
The old bottles' fate to share,  
Only that its flight is quicker  
Up the vortices of air?  
Is it lost as soon as tasted,  
Rising upon moth-like wings  
To be caught and scorched and wasted  
In this foolish flame of things?  
Ah, the blood of nature's spilling  
Trickles back into her veins,



And her cup is ever filling

With the vintage that she strains.

For a moment she befriends us

With unsealing of our eyes,

But the light of life she lends us

Floods her everlasting skies.

The sweet wine that makes our passion

Linking heart to mortal heart

Is her ancient fire to fashion

All the marvels of her art.

It has painted woman's beauty,

It is parent to the flowers,

It has wedded joy to duty,

Portioned loves among the hours,

Built us palaces and churches,

Plucked its music from the lyre,

Lighted all the spirit's searches

Through the mazes of desire,

Yes, and scorning earthly places

And our human loves and wars

THE BOTTLES AND THE WINE 197

It has peopled heaven's spaces  
And has gilded heaven's stars.

Drink, then, of this cup and drain it.  
Let the wine renew the soul,  
And all vessels that contain it,  
May they long be sound and whole  
To receive the boon and give it  
That makes mortal joys divine.  
Here 's to life and all who live it,  
To the bottles and the wine.

## THE POETIC MEDIUM

IN Chelsea dwells a Sibyl known to fame  
Called Mrs. Fakir — necromantic name !  
Past, present, future, open to her view  
She (for ten dollars) will reveal to you.  
I for less sums — the discount to the trade —  
Quaff at her fount and seek her undismayed.  
I found the priestess in her wonted lair  
Up three steep flights of narrow dirty stair.  
Chill was the darkened chamber. A thick fume  
Of kerosene lent odour to the gloom.  
Clothed in black weeds, pale, with delirious hair,  
Rocked Mrs. Fakir in her rocking-chair.  
I told my errand ; with some hushed complaint  
About the fee, she fell into a faint,

Thrice rolled her eyes, thrice snorted through her  
nose,

Thrice wrung her hands, and wriggled thrice her toes,  
Then spoke. (I versify : she uttered vulgar prose.)

"You want some verse : not every poet's soul

Whose aid you crave is still in my control.

Whom would you summon? You must ask the boon  
Of some frail wight that floats below the moon.

The spirits that have risen to the stars

Reck not the echoes of our earthly jars.

Their troubles past, they have forgotten ours,

And move unmoved by even magic powers.

Only weak souls entangled in the mesh

Of passion, dying, still are bond to flesh,

And hover o'er the battle-field of life

To smell their kindred blood and pine for strife.

Such I may summon, for they have no choice .

Who crave to live again and find a voice."

"'T is well," I answered. "If the gods so please,

We will not call on Aristophanes,

Horace shall slumber, Juvenal be dumb.  
They rest in peace. But haply Swift will come."  
"Not Swift," she said, "not Swift. I cannot tell  
Whether he flew to heaven or to hell,  
But he is gone far from this mild, low-born,  
And canting age, incapable of scorn."  
"Well, summon Byron, then," I said and sighed.  
"Byron is also safe," the witch replied.  
"The first sin punished and the first forgiven  
Is love's, the slip of climbers into heaven.  
The petted passion and the shallow dream  
He purged at last; the heart survived supreme."  
"Byron gone too," thought I, "what wit remains?  
All younger sprites have water in their veins.  
But, ah! might not the living help me out?  
Don't phantoms of the living flit about?"  
"They do, they do," quoth Chelsea's Pythoness.  
"Here in my telepathic cave's recess  
All that they say or think or wish or feel  
I read aloud, but most what they conceal.

Thrice rolled her eyes, thrice snorted through her  
nose,

Thrice wrung her hands, and wriggled thrice her toes,  
Then spoke. (I versify : she uttered vulgar prose.)

"You want some verse : not every poet's soul

Whose aid you crave is still in my control.

Whom would you summon? You must ask the boon

Of some frail wight that floats below the moon.

The spirits that have risen to the stars

Reck not the echoes of our earthly jars.

Their troubles past, they have forgotten ours,

And move unmoved by even magic powers.

Only weak souls entangled in the mesh

Of passion, dying, still are bond to flesh,

And hover o'er the battle-field of life

To smell their kindred blood and pine for strife.

Such I may summon, for they have no choice

Who crave to live again and find a voice."

"T is well," I answered. "If the gods so please,

We will not call on Aristophanes,

---

No, Mrs. Fakir, none of this small fry.  
Catch me some ghost of sense, or else good-bye.  
Not at my bidding shall this choir prolong  
The cloying drivel of unmeaning song,  
Enrich the echo, maul the note and tease,  
Miauling nothing in a hundred keys.  
Better Pope's squirrel eye and polished sneer  
Than idiot mouthings, false without veneer.  
Better Boileau's 'monotony in wire,'  
Dressing good wit in periwigged attire ;  
For in a garden's alleys or a wood  
Hung all in green, monotony is good,  
And a frail stem may need a bit of wire  
To keep the rose from trailing in the mire.  
Never will they dig deep or build for time  
Who of unreason weave a maze of rhyme,  
Worship a weakness, nurse a whim, and bind  
Wreaths about temples tenantless of mind,  
Forsake the path the seeing Muses trod,  
And shatter Nature to discover God.

Thrice rolled her eyes, thrice snorted through her  
nose,

Thrice wrung her hands, and wriggled thrice her toes,  
Then spoke. (I versify : she uttered vulgar prose.)

"You want some verse : not every poet's soul

Whose aid you crave is still in my control.

Whom would you summon? You must ask the boon  
Of some frail wight that floats below the moon.

The spirits that have risen to the stars

Reck not the echoes of our earthly jars.

Their troubles past, they have forgotten ours,

And move unmoved by even magic powers.

Only weak souls entangled in the mesh

Of passion, dying, still are bond to flesh,

And hover o'er the battle-field of life

To smell their kindred blood and pine for strife.

Such I may summon, for they have no choice .

Who crave to live again and find a voice."

"'T is well," I answered. "If the gods so please,

We will not call on Aristophanes,



Can we blame them we mistaught  
If now they seek another guide  
And, since our wisdom comes to naught,  
Take counsel of their proper pride?  
Nature beckons them, inviting  
To a deeper draught of fate,  
And, the heart's desire inciting,  
Can we stop and bid them wait?

"If old Uncle Sam were living,  
This, you say, should never be :  
Ah ! if Uncle Sam were living,  
He might weep, but he must see.  
Yet he died in time, believing  
In the gods that ruled his days.  
We, alas ! survive him, grieving  
Under gods we will not praise.  
The keen pleasures of December  
Mean the joys of April lost ;  
And shall rising suns remember

All the dream worlds they have crossed?  
All things mortal have their season :  
Nothing lives, for ever young,  
But renews its life by treason  
To the thing from which it sprung,  
And when man has reached immortal  
Mansions, after toiling long,  
Life deserts him at the portal,  
And he only lives in song.

“As for Sam, the son, I wonder  
If you know the fellow's heart :  
There may yet be something under  
Nobler than the outer part.  
When he told that señorita  
That he kissed and hugged her close  
Like a brother, did he cheat her?  
Did he cheat himself? Who knows?  
That he liked her, that is certain ;  
That he wronged her is n't true.

On his thoughts I draw the curtain :

I don't know them, nor do you.

In her maid, the facile Rica,

We have quite another case.

Hardly did he go to seek her,

When she rushed to his embrace.

I confess it was improper,

But all flesh, alas ! is flesh.

Things had gone too far to drop her ;

Each was in the other's mesh.

But with that poor Filipina,

When she shrank from his caress,

His contemptible demeanour

Is n't easy to express.

First he bought her, then he kicked her ;

But the truth is, he was drunk,

For that day had crowned him victor,

And a Spanish fleet was sunk.

“ You perceive I do not spare him,  
Nor am blinded to his moles  
By the Christian love I bear him ;  
Yes ; he 's sowing his wild oats.  
But you can't deny him talent ;  
Once his instinct is awake,  
He can play the part of gallant  
And of soldier and of rake.  
And it 's something to have spirit  
Though in rashness first expressed.  
Give me good blood to inherit :  
Time and trial do the rest.  
He 's not Uncle Sam, the father,  
That prim, pompous, pious man,  
Yankee, or Virginian, rather :  
Sammy 's an American —  
Lavish, clever, loud, and pushing,  
Loving bargains, loving strife,  
Kindly, fearless-eyed, unblushing,  
Not yet settled down in life.

Send him forth ; the world will mellow

His bluff youth, or nothing can.

Nature made the hearty fellow,

Life will make the gentleman.

And if Cousin Sam is callow,

It was we who did the harm,

Letting his young soul lie fallow —

The one waste spot in the farm —

Trained by sordid inventories

To scorn all he could n't buy,

Puffed with miserable glories

Shouted at an empty sky,

Fooled with cant of a past era,

Droned 'twixt dreamy lid and lid,

Till his God was a chimera

And the living God was hid.

Let him look up from his standard

To the older stars of heaven,

Seaward by whose might, and landward,

All the tribes of men are driven ;

By whom ancient hopes were blasted,  
Ancient labours turned to dust ;  
Whence the little that has lasted  
Borrows patience to be just :  
And beholding tribulation,  
Seeing whither states are hurled,  
Let him sign his declaration  
Of dependence on the world."

Thus the Doctor's sermon ended ;  
The old Deacon shook his head,  
For his conscience was offended  
And his wits had lost the thread.  
So have mine, but there 's my fable :  
Now, and when you cast your votes,  
Be as lenient as you 're able  
On " Young Sammy's First Wild Oats."

## SPAIN IN AMERICA

WHEN scarce the echoes of Manila Bay,  
Circling each slumbering billowy hemisphere,  
Had met where Spain's forlorn Armada lay  
Locked amid hostile hills, and whispered near  
The double omen of that groan and cheer —  
Haste to do now what must be done anon  
Or some mad hope of selling triumph dear  
Drove the ships forth : soon was *Teresa* gone,  
*Furór, Plutón, Vizcaya, Oquendo,* and *Colón*.

And when the second morning dawned serene  
O'er vivid waves and foam-fringed mountains,  
dressed  
Like Nessus in their robe's envenomed sheen,  
Scarce by some fiery fleck the place was guessed  
Where each hulk smouldered ; while from crest to  
crest

Leapt through the North the news of victory,  
Victory tarnished by a boorish jest  
Yet touched with pity, lest the unkindly sea  
Should too much aid the strong and leave no enemy.

As the anguished soul, that gasped for difficult  
    breath,  
Passes to silence from its house of pain,  
So from those wrecks, in fumes of lurid death,  
Passed into peace the heavy pride of Spain,  
Passed from that aching tenement, half fain,  
Back to her castled hills and windy moors,  
No longer tossed upon the treacherous main  
Once boasted hers, which with its watery lures  
Too long enticed her sons to unhallowed sepultures.

Why went Columbus to that highland race,  
Frugal and pensive, prone to love and ire,  
Despising kingdoms for a woman's face,  
For honour riches and for faith desire?

---



On Spain's own breast was snow, within it fire ;  
In her own eyes and subtle tongue was mirth ;  
The eternal brooded in her skies, whence nigher  
The trebled starry host admonished earth  
To shame away her grief and mock her baubles' worth.

Ah ! when the crafty Tyrian came to Spain  
To barter for her gold his motley wares,  
Treading her beaches he forgot his gain.  
The Semite became noble unawares.  
Her passion breathed Hamilcar's cruel prayers ;  
Her fiery winds taught Hannibal his vows ;  
Out of her tribulations and despairs  
They wove a sterile garland for their brows.  
To her sad ports they fled before the Roman prow.

And the Greek coming too forgot his art,  
And that large temperance which made him wise.  
The wonder of her mountains choked his heart,  
The languor of her gardens veiled his eyes ;

He dreamed, he doubted ; in her deeper skies  
He read unfathomed oracles of woe,  
And stubborn to the onward destinies,  
Like some dumb brute before a human foe,  
Sank in Saguntum's flames and deemed them  
brighter so.

The mighty Roman also when he came,  
Bringing his gods, his justice, and his tongue,  
Put off his greatness for a sadder fame,  
And what a Cæsar wrought a Lucan sung.  
Nor was the pomp of his proud music, wrung  
From Latin numbers, half so stern and dire,  
Nor the sad majesties he moved among  
Half so divine, as her unbreathed desire.  
Shall longing break the heart and not untune the lyre?

When after many conquerors came Christ,  
The only conqueror of Spain indeed,  
Not Bethlehem nor Golgotha sufficed  
To show him forth, but every shrine must bleed

And every shepherd in his watches heed  
The angels' matins sung at heaven's gate.  
Nor seemed the Virgin Mother wholly freed  
From taint of ill if born in frail estate,  
But shone the seraphs' queen and soared immaculate.

And when the Arab from his burning sands  
Swept o'er the waters like a heavenly flail,  
He took her lute into his conquering hands,  
And in her midnight turned to nightingale.  
With woven lattices and pillars frail  
He screened the pleasant secrets of his bower,  
Yet little could his subtler arts avail  
Against the brutal onset of the Giaour.  
The rose passed from his courts, the muezzin from his  
tower.

Only one image of his wisdom stayed,  
One only relic of his magic lore, —  
Allah the Great, whom silent fate obeyed,  
More than Jehovah calm and hidden more,

Allah remained in her heart's kindred core  
High witness of these terrene shifts of wrong.  
Into his ancient silence she could pour  
Her passions' frailty — He alone is strong —  
And chant with lingering wail the burden of her song.

Seizing at Covadonga the rude cross  
Pelayo raised amid his mountaineers,  
She bore it to Granada, one day's loss  
Ransomed with battles of a thousand years.  
A nation born in harness, fed on tears,  
Christened in blood, and schooled in sacrifice,  
All for a sweeter music in the spheres,  
All for a painted heaven — at a price  
Should she forsake her loves and sail to Ind for  
spice?

Had Genoa in her merchant palaces  
No welcome for a heaven-guided son?  
Had Venice, mistress of the inland seas,  
No ships for bolder venture? Pisa none?

Was sated Rome content? Her mission done?  
Saw Lusitania in her seaward dreams  
No floating premonition, beckoning on  
To vast horizons, gilded yet with gleams  
Of old Atlantis, whelmed beneath the bubbling  
streams?

Or if some torpor lay upon the South,  
Tranced by the might of memories divine,  
Dwelt no shrewd princeling by the marshy mouth  
Of Scheldt, or by the many mouths of Rhine?  
Rode Albion not at anchor in the brine  
Whose throne but now the thrifty Tudor stole  
Changing a noble for a crafty line?  
Swarmed not the Norsemen yet about the pole,  
Seeking through endless mists new havens for the  
soul?

These should have been thy mates, Columbus,  
these  
Patrons and partners of thy enterprise,

Sad lovers of immeasurable seas,  
Bound to no hallowed earth, no peopled skies.  
No ray should reach them of their ladies' eyes  
In western deserts : no pure minstrel's rhyme,  
Echoing in forest solitudes, surprise  
Their heart with longing for a sweeter clime.  
These, these should find a world who drag no  
chains of time.

In sooth it had seemed folly, to reveal  
To stubborn Aragon and evil-eyed  
These perilous hopes, folly to dull Castile  
Moated in jealous faith and walled in pride,  
Save that those thoughts, to Spain's fresh deeds  
allied,  
Painted new Christian conquests, and her hand  
Itched for that sword, now dangling at her side,  
Which drove the Moslem forth and purged the  
land.  
And then she dreamed a dream her heart could  
understand.

Three caravels, a cross upon the prow,  
A broad cross on the banner and the sail,  
The liquid fields of Hesperus should plough  
Borne by the leaping waters and the gale.  
Before that sign all hellish powers should quail  
Troubling the deep : no dragon's obscene crest,  
No serpent's slimy coils should aught avail,  
Till ivory cities looming in the west  
Should gleam from high Cathay or Araby the  
Blest.

Then, as with noble mien and debonair  
The captains from the galleys leapt to land,  
Or down the temple's alabaster stair  
Or by the river's marge of silvery sand,  
Proud Sultans should descend with outstretched  
hand  
Greeting the strangers, and by them apprised  
Of Christ's redemption and the Queen's com-  
mand,

Being with joy and gratitude baptised,  
Should lavish gifts of price by rarest art devised.

Or if (since churls there be) they should demur  
To some least point of fealty or faith,  
A champion, clad in arms from crest to spur,  
Should challenge the proud caitiffs to their death  
And, singly felling them, from their last breath  
Extort confession that the Lord is lord,  
And India's Catholic queen, Elizabeth.  
Whereat yon turbaned tribes, with one accord,  
Should beat their heathen breasts and ope their  
treasures' horde.

Or, if the worst should chance and high debates  
Should end in insult and outrageous deed,  
And, many Christians rudely slain, their mates  
Should summon heaven to their direful need,  
Suddenly from the clouds a snow-white steed  
Bearing a dazzling rider clad in flames  
Should plunge into the fray : with instant speed



Rout all the foe at once, while mid acclaims  
The slaughtered braves should rise, crying, *Saint*  
*James ! Saint James !*

Then, the day won, and its bright arbiter  
Vanished, save for peace he left behind,  
Each in his private bosom should bestir  
His dearest dream : as that perchance there pined  
Some lovely maiden of angelic mind  
In those dark towers, awaiting out of Spain  
Two Saviours that her horoscope divined  
Should thence arrive. She (womanlike) were fain  
Not to be wholly free, but wear a chosen chain.

That should be youth's adventure. Riper days  
Would crave the guerdon of a prouder power  
And pluck their nuggets from an earthly maze  
For rule and dignity and children's dower.  
And age that thought to near the fatal hour  
Should to a magic fount descend instead,  
Whose waters with the fruit revive the flower

And deck in all its bloom the ashen head,  
Where a green heaven spreads, not peopled of the  
dead.

By such false meteors did those helmsmen steer,  
Such phantoms filled their vain and vaulting souls  
With divers ardours, while this brooding sphere  
Swung yet ungirdled on her silent poles.  
All journeys took them farther from their goals,  
All battles won defeated their desire,  
Barred from one India by the other's shoals,  
Each sighted star extinguishing its fire,  
Cape doubled after cape, and never haven nigher.

How many galleons sailed to sail no more,  
How many battles and how many slain,  
Since first Columbus touched the Cuban shore,  
Till Aurocania felt the yoke of Spain !  
What mounting miseries ! What dwindling gain !  
To till those solitudes, soon swept of gold,

And bear that ardent sun, across the main  
Slaves must come writhing in the festering hold  
Of galleys. — Poison works, though men be brave  
and bold.

That slothful planter, once the buccaneer,  
Lord of his bastards and his mongrel clan,  
Ignorant, harsh, what could he list or hear  
Of Europe and the heritage of man?  
No petty schemer sees the larger plan,  
No privy tyrant brooks the mightier law,  
But lash in hand rides forth a partisan  
Of freedom : base, without the touch of awe,  
He poisoned first the blood his poniard was to draw.

By sloth and lust and mindlessness and pelf  
Spain sank in sadness and dishonour down,  
Each in her service serving but himself,  
Each in his passion striking at her crown.  
Not that these treasons blotted her renown  
Emblazoned higher than such hands can reach :

There where she reaped but sorrow she has sown  
The balm of sorrow ; all she had to teach  
She taught the younger world — her faith and heart  
and speech.

And now within her sea-girt walls withdrawn  
She waits in silence for the healing years,  
While where her sun has set a second dawn  
Comes from the north, with other hopes and  
fears.

Spain's daughters stand, half ceasing from their  
tears,

And watch the skies from Cuba to the Horn.

"What is this dove or eagle that appears,"

They seem to cry, "what herald of what morn  
Hovers o'er Andes' peaks in love or guile or  
scorn?"

"O brooding Spirit, fledgling of the North,  
Winged for the levels of its shifting light,  
Child of a labouring ocean and an earth

Shrouded in vapours, fear the southward flight,  
Dread waveless waters and their warm delight,  
Beware of peaks that cleave the cloudless blue  
And hold communion with the naked night.

The souls went never back that hither flew,  
But sighing fell to earth or broke the heavens through.

“ Haunt still thy storm-swept islands, and endure  
The shimmering forest where thy visions live.  
Then if we love thee — for thy heart is pure —  
Thou shalt have something worthy love to give.  
Thrust not thy prophets on us, nor believe  
Thy sorry riches in our eyes are fair.  
Thy unctuous sophists never will deceive  
A mortal pang, or charm away despair.

Not for the stranger's fee we plait our lustrous hair.

“ But of thy lingering twilight bring some gleam,  
Memorial of the immaterial fire  
Lighting thy heart, and to a wider dream  
Waken the music of our plaintive lyre.

Check our rash word, hush, hush our base desire.  
Hang paler clouds of reverence about  
Our garish skies : laborious hope inspire  
That uncomplaining walks the paths of doubt,  
A wistful heart within, a mailèd breast without.

“ Gold found is dross, but long Promethean art  
Transmutes to gold the unprofitable ore.  
Bring labour's joy, yet spare that better part  
Our mother, Spain, bequeathed to all she bore,  
For who shall covet if he once adore?  
Leave in our skies, strange Spirit passing there,  
No less of vision but of courage more,  
And of our worship take thy equal share,  
Thou who wouldst teach us hope, with her who taught  
us prayer.”

---

## YOUTH'S IMMORTALITY

WHAT, when hearts have met, shall sever  
Heart from heart, though heaven fall?  
They alone are dead for ever  
Who have never lived at all.  
Roses that have bloomed to sweetness  
Never can untimely fade,  
Blessed by death in their completeness  
And on beauty's bosom laid,  
Garnered in the breast eternal  
Where all noble joys are one,  
Sweet Elysium, fair and vernal,  
Where they mount who face the sun.  
Happy he whom men call lonely,  
Whose companion is the truth,

And whose heart is ravished only  
By the world's immortal youth.  
Happy he whose single treasure  
Is the infinite unfurled,  
And whose voice has caught the measure  
Of the music of the world.  
When Death gathers up our ashes  
And our sorry shades depart,  
Lo, Life's flame, rekindled, flashes  
From another mortal heart,  
And Death turns about, derided  
By the Life he would deride.  
Vainly space and time divided  
What eternity allied.  
One great hope guides all our seeing,  
One pure heaven lends us light.  
Love is still the crown of being,  
Faith the better part of sight.  
The same wisdom's ancient pages  
Stir again the generous soul



To the mighty task of ages  
Crawling still to reason's goal.  
The prophetic Muse of Story  
Sings her ancient legend o'er,  
And the sea, still young and hoary,  
Chants along the beaten shore.  
Spring yet yields her flowery treasures  
To the guiltless hands of boys,  
Chastening their noisy pleasures  
To the depth of human joys.  
One eternal passion drives us,  
Zealots of the stars above,  
And our better part survives us,  
Living in the things we love.



